THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN ACTION EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED:

IN WHICH

THE OPINIONS OF DR. PRIESTLEY

ON THE SUBJECT

ARE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

"This is a beaten track."—Is this a track
Should not be beaten? Never beat enough,
Till enough learnt the Truths it would inspire.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

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IN the Preface to the following Tract the reader will observe, that the author originally intended to wait some time after it was completed, to see if any similar undertaking might render its Public appearance unnecessary. Certain unavoidable circumstances (of which it is needless to give the detail) have protracted this delay much beyond the period first meant; yet in it, he thinks, nothing has been published which anticipates his design. For, though there are many striking observations advanced on the same side of the question, in a recent work,* by an author who has long been justly admired for his accurate and intimate knowledge of the human mind, yet its arguments are not so directly pointed to the

* REID on the Active Powers of Man.

reasoning of a fashionable Necessitarian, as seems at this time to be wished. They do not avowedly meet his favourite plausibilities. They do not, in short, properly reply to DR. PRIESTLEY; without which, in a due degree, it is imagined, most of the present advocates for Necessity will think nothing *is*, or *can be* satisfactorily done by an opponent.—Therefore, though this valuable work is in our possession; though in the above-named interval the attention of speculative readers may have a little cooled with regard to the question in debate, and though in another late capital performance on Morals,* the Freedom of the Human Will is taken for granted, as too apparent of itself, and too deeply fixed in common apprehension to need an anxious support,—still the author of the following Essay presumes, that an undertaking of its kind is at this time due to the cause of Truth: Even urgently due:—For it appears a fact, that

* PALEY's Philosophy of Morals.

the dark, cold, and uncouth doctrine he endeavours to explode, is gaining ground among us daily, and of course (to say no worse of it) contributing to the increase of that idle sophistry, and rage for scepticism and paradox, which so peculiarly mark these times; flatter their licentiousness, and too often debase those extended views, and able exertions, which, but for such alloy, might augment social happiness, and advance the dignity of human nature.

On these accounts, and as an interested, though humble advocate for sound principles and just reasoning in whatever relates to morality and religion, the author hopes he will be pardoned for attempting to revive the topic he has discussed, and for troubling the Public with a *new* effort on the side of Human Liberty, and in favour of a dictate of our Common Sense.

September 12th, 1789.

PREFACE.

THE *necessary* manner in which all *material* things act upon one another, soon led to an enquiry among the ancient Philosophers whether the *mind* was subject to a like restraint, or (as appeared plausible on the first glance of reflection) there was something so peculiar in its nature and movements, as to exempt it from so degrading an idea. They saw that the external circumstances of things (whether they related to the situation of what is material, or any of the ordinary or extraordinary laws of providence,—and which they generally termed *Fate*) were not in our power, but imposed upon us, and that *so far* we ought to be deemed the objects of *Necessity*.

But, at the same time, they almost universally taught, that men's volitions and actions are *free*; that this freedom arises from the *self-moving* power, or vital efficacy of the soul or mind; that a power so peculiar should alone characterize our actions, and that except the mind were *necessary of* or *within* itself, it mattered not how the *outward* circumstances of things were ruled and affected.

Some philosophers, indeed, held the contrary doctrine, and contended that human action is *necessary*. But they did not ground their opinion, as is done at present by the Necessitarians, on a philosophical examination into the nature of Volition, and the mental process that precedes it; but either *first*, (as CHRYSIPPUS) on the mere circumstance of those particulars above alluded to, called *Fate*, being *concerned* as *concomitant* causes in our volitions; or *secondly*, (as DIODORUS) on the account of the Divine

foreknowledge of events, which they considered, with some modern writers, as implying *necessity*; or *lastly*, (as DEMOCRITUS, and other supporters of the *atomical* system) on the idea of *mind*, and every thing else in the universe being *mere matter*.

These opinions, however, were still opposed in a manner generally thought satisfactory by the learned. And, attending *chiefly* to their experimental feelings, and the essential use they found the doctrine of Human Liberty of in Morality and Religion, the heathen philosophers from first to last, and the earlier christian ones, were for the most part confirmed and avowed advocates for man's free-agency.

And thus matters continued till about the middle of the last century, when the refinement, with which modern metaphysics are distinguished, brought this tenet deeply and eagerly into dispute, by the propagation of the doctrine at present well

known by the name of *Philosophical Necessity*. And now that the debate is on foot, every friend of truth, moral and religious, must earnestly wish to see it finally and clearly determined; as it is undoubtedly one of the most important in the compass of human enquiry. A just settlement of it not only seems desirable, but we have something within us too, which would rejoice to see the decision in favour of *Liberty*; of *what* men have always esteemed the noblest of privileges, and fancied themselves undoubtedly possessed.

Since the date abovenamed, several of our best and most learned writers have been engaged in the controversy; and the contest has appeared with various aspects. Sometimes in favour of *Liberty*, and sometimes of *Necessity*, just as one or other of these tenets happened to be espoused by popular writers.

Of late, however, the Necessitarian side

of the question has met with an advocate, who, though he may have found it difficult to *convince*, has certainly *silenced* his adversaries, and left the question in such a state, that, I apprehend, till some other mode, or principles of reasoning, be brought to the contest, than what have yet been used, we must grant, however reluctantly, that the doctrine of *Philosophical Necessity* is true.

It is needless to say that the advocate here meant is Dr. PRIESTLEY: a writer, whose comprehension of mind, promptness of recollection, extended knowledge, perspicuity of style, and facility of composition, render him a most formidable opponent; but who, at the same time, on certain subjects, does not seem to possess that depth of penetration, which is often the lot of more phlegmatic natures, nor that rectitude of judgment which enables men, amid the allurements of prejudices, to espouse opini-

ons, which will bear accurate examination, and comport with the truth of things.

Unwelcome, however, as I fancy this issue (if it must be its issue) will prove to mankind in general, the Doctor meets it with the most cordial sentiments. He rejoices to find there is but one proper agent in the universe, and that every thing without distinction may be safely ascribed to God; that we are but instruments in his hands to bring about intended events, and that men are as necessarily determined to act by motives, as a stone to fall by gravity. He calls *Philosophical Necessity* a *great* and *glorious* scheme, worthy of a Christian philosopher and divine, and thinks it an honour to this country that HOBBES was the first man who explicitly taught it. In short, he says every thing in its favour, that could be dictated by piety, and infuses into his pages the strongest evidence of his being influenced by sincerity.

That truth of every kind is much indebted to the bold inquisitive spirit of these kingdoms, is a fact for which we have many reasons to boast. But as it is not seldom that error assumes its shape, and prepossession fancies it sees what does not exist, this *boldness* and *inquisitiveness* may often adopt and propagate opinions, as dangerous as they are rare; and, hence, do more injury to the peace of mankind by unhinging revered opinions, than can be atoned for by the speculative illumination which they are wished to afford. And whether the great complacency with which our ingenious and adventurous author views the loss of Human Liberty, does not arise from some previous attachment to *system*, will by many be called, at least, in doubt. It may acquire its charms, with him, in a good measure, from harmonizing with certain Socinian tenets; from having a tendency, however remote, to disprove the pre-exis-

tence of Christ, the doctrine of eternal punishments, and to draw after it, to use his own expression, *a thousand other changes in opinion:* and hence he may have been induced to pour out encomiums, which are, in fact, as little deserved, as I fancy they will in general be liked.—But a good deal of this must depend upon the merits of the question; and, concerning the rest, it may not be so candid to inquire, as to give the following ingenuous account of the origin and intent of these pages.

Having lately had occasion to look into some of Dr. PRIESTLEY's metaphysical tracts, the author was induced to read the whole of what he has said in behalf of *Philosophical Necessity*; and then, of course, what his chief opponents, Dr. PRICE and Mr. PALMER, have urged in reply. Apprehending, on the close of this survey, that, though Dr. PRIESTLEY had managed the matter so as to gain an evident advantage in the con-

test, his main principles were, nevertheless, either wrong, or his reasoning inconclusive, he set about investigating the nature of Human Agency *de novo*, in his own manner. And though he had an acknowledged predilection for the doctrine of *Free Will*, he also resolved, as far as he was able, to abide by a conclusion in favour of *either* opinion, if it were but satisfactory. The result, however, happened to agree with his wishes. And finding, after waiting due time for the trial, that there were no more attempts made to invalidate the Doctor's reasoning, and fancying that the modes of illustration which had occurred in this inquiry, if properly managed, sufficient to do it, he resolved to lay his process before the public; in hopes that it might not only infuse fresh ardour into the advocates for *Liberty*, but enable them, on a renewal of the contest, to turn the victory to the other side.

On entering on a larger course of reading, preparative to a revisal of his essay, he found that CLARKE's principles of *Free Will*, from whence its present advocates have drawn the whole of their reasoning, were inadequate to the controversy as it now stands; and that, though what this learned writer has said is materially true, yet, on account of its being introduced unconnectedly, or not in the form of investigation, it seemed to lose much of its weight, and to be unable to overturn several metaphysical arguments at present insisted on by the Necessitarians, as the chief support of their theory.

He found, also, that there is a great deal of truth in many things advanced by these sectaries in behalf of their cause, (sometimes too hastily denied by their opponents) but that, by an unlucky fallacy of appearance, not easy to detect in the moment of trial, inferences were plausibly drawn from them,

which were in reality as false, as they were hostile to Liberty.

In short, he found that a true delineation of the nature of *Human Action* took in a great deal of the favourite principles laid down and urged by several authors belonging to both parties, and that to decide the contest, and clear the matter up to a competent reader, would only be to give a proper account of the mechanism of the mind; its process in forming volitions, and to place some equivocal particulars in such a point of view, as would deprive them of their fallacious lights, and shew them to be what they really are.

Though thus much, however, is soon said, and may be apprehended to be easily done, the author has not the vanity to think he has accomplished it completely. Besides a consciousness of his inability to do justice to the subject, he is persuaded, both from its nature, and from considering the hands

through which it has already passed,* that it is, not only, as HUME calls it, the most contentious question in the most contentious science, but, on account of its many ambiguous niceties, perhaps one of the most difficult with which language can engage, [†] and hence will, require, to perfect it, the greatest comprehension of mind, and happiness of illustration. The pride of the author will therefore be sufficiently gratified (as well as his trouble rewarded) if he has been lucky enough to sketch out a plan, which, in other hands, may be the means of vindicating the Freedom of Human Action, and settling a controversy which has but too long puzzled and misled the inge-

* Those of LOCKE, WOLLASTON, CLARKE, KING, &c. &c. and of several eminent living authors.

[† "If there be any thing obscure and difficult in philosophy, we are sure to find it in that part which treats of Elections and Liberty. There is no point about which the learned are more divided from each other. Nor is it an easy matter to understand them, or to give a certain and true representation of their opinions." *King's Origin of Evil.*]

nious lover of truth, however it may have fared with the less competent and learned by-stander.

From these circumstances, the reader will not expect any great *accuracy of method*, either to be shewn, or attempted, in the following essay. The author fancies it will be deemed sufficient for the purpose, if the chain of investigation he has pursued, *really* lead to the designed conclusion, though it be neither so *short*, so *uniform*, nor so well *polished*, as it might have been. The writer who is to reduce a difficult subject to *systematic perfection*, will succeed best when he has little to trouble himself with, beyond the *appearance* of his work, and the *disposal* of materials, which have been previously procured by those who were more intent on *acquisition* than *arrangement*; better pleased with *matter* than *form*. As much of *plan*, however, has been aimed at in this essay as could easily be given to a *first*

draught, in which, of course, part of the materials must be fortuitous, as well as foreseen. And the number of notes, and other incidental remarks, will manifest the writer's desire to bring into one view, every thing judged likely to enlighten the subject, or yield satisfaction to an inquisitive reader.

In the representation of Human Agency, given in this tract, the author has adopted so many particulars which are insisted on by the Necessitarians, that some of them may perhaps class him (as Dr. PRIESTLEY often does his adversaries) on their side of the question in every thing but words. This however he thinks will not be done by any one who perceives the truth, and is willing to own it. Though the *characteristic* of Free Will may not be as palpable as a geometrical proposition, it may be equally true, and those who expect it to lie (as some seem to do) in sheer unconnectedness, can meet

with nothing but disappointment in their researches.

There have been many able and noted writers in behalf of *Philosophical Necessity*, as HOBBES, COLLINS, HUTCHINSON, HUME, KAIMS, &c. but their whole strength seems to be united in Dr. PRIESTLEY. And as, therefore, to refute him, is to refute them all, the author perhaps might have appeared with more advantage, as to *heroism*, had he *directly* applied his principles to so popular an attempt. But this would have spun the enquiry out too far. And should he have succeeded in it, he apprehends it would not, in the end, have been of as much service to the cause he has espoused, as a more general and orderly view of the subject. He thinks it sufficient, that, if what is advanced in the four propositions, introduced chapter *fifth*, be true, they will, on an easy application, thoroughly overturn, or invalidate, all that is plausible in the Doctor's theory.

In general, however, this may be here properly remarked on the manner of our author's treating the subject, that it is too desultory and immethodical to be well adapted to the discovery of truth, and that he has not paid a due attention to the *whole* of the particulars concerned in the question; that he studiously keeps out of sight *the active power of the Will*, so much insisted on by his adversaries, and on which (when *rightly* explained) so much of the controversy depends; that he frequently represents their account of the action of the Will, in forming volitions, as having no reference at all to motives,* and that, when he talks

* As may be strikingly seen (for *one* example) in his account of the *two Boys*, sect. vii. of his *Treat. on Necessity*. Our author, however, is not singular in this representation. Most of his predecessors have described Human Liberty in the same way. And, though Dr. CLARKE, who is universally allowed the best writer in its behalf, takes the influence of motives into his theory, it must be owned *others* on the same side, have written so inaccurately or unguardedly, as to countenance this *false notion*. To this false notion, then, more than to the zeal of opinion, or the arts of controversy,

of the real and full power, which every one has to promote his own welfare on every occasion, (a circumstance which is certainly true, and only to be accounted for on the principles of Liberty) his plausibility totally fails him, and, after many struggles, he appears unable to reconcile the fact to his hypothesis.

we will ascribe the ignominious characters several Necessitarians are pleased to give of Human Freedom. Dr. PRIESTLEY calls it *absurd* and *dangerous*. COLLINS (whose book on the subject the Dr. wishes reprinted) says it is *atheistical*. And Mr. J. EDWARDS (in a *Treatise on Free Will*, which the Dr. also recommends as unanswerable on his side of the question) thus descants upon it.—"All the *Armenians* on the "earth might be challenged, without arrogance, to make "these principles of theirs consistent with common sense, "yea, and perhaps to produce any doctrine ever embraced by "the blindest bigot of the church of Rome, or the most ig-"norant Mussulman, or extravagant enthusiast, that might "be reduced to more and more demonstrable inconsistencies "and repugnancies to common sense and to themselves; "though their inconsistencies may not, indeed, lie so deep, "or be so artfully veiled by a deceitful ambiguity of words, "and an indeterminate signification of phrases."—These terms are harsh. But as their object is clearly *visionary*, it is to be hoped they will not hereafter find admission into the dispute.

Yet let it be observed in behalf of our author, that though his strong predilection for a pious kind of fatalism is evident in *this* controversy, he conducts it, on the whole with unusual fairness. If the bias to his tenet be so powerful as to induce him to use some artifices of debate, which had better have not appeared, no one properly acquainted with the construction of man, or, I may add, the construction of books, will notice these blemishes with much reproof. And while we are thus glancing at partialities to which, in some degree, every one is liable, let us likewise remember in behalf of *all* the writers who have already treated on the subject, or may hereafter engage in it, that its singular difficulties, will, with every candid mind, be an apology for many errors and imperfections. It must yet, perhaps, be the accession of materials from various hands, and an agitation of the more earnest sort, that can separate the

points in dispute from their alloy of prejudice, and furnish us with such a systematic view of the enquiry, as will unite perspicuity and truth; overpower the hesitances of accustomed doubt, and gratify common apprehension with the genuine deductions of philosophy.

As to what the author has offered, in the following pages, towards this desirable acquisition, though he may have spoken of it with too much confidence, and appear too desirous to have it supposed that some of his remarks are new and important, he still would wish to be thought as sensible as any of his readers, how much he will stand in need of the above apology.—But as what is liable to be deemed false modesty may injure an address of this kind, as well as tediousness, without more words the following Essay is submitted to the judgment of its perusers.

Jan. 15, 1783.

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THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN ACTION EXPLAINED, AND VINDICATED.

CHAPTER 1.

Distinctions respecting CAUSE *and* EFFECT.

IT may be proper here to inform the reader, that part of the next chapter, and the most of this, as relating to some of the common terms and principles of philosophy, might in the present inquiry have been taken for granted, and omitted. But, as *some* readers may enter on the subject not duly prepared with this kind of learning, and *others*

receive advantage from having these rudiments revived in their minds, they have a place in this tract, as not unsuitable for an *introduction*.

Experience informs us, that all *matter* (both animate and inanimate) has, in the operation of certain laws and properties given it by the Creator, and under the influence of the *motion*, which may in many cases be communicated to it by living agency, a power of producing within itself a number of different appearances.

In the production of these appearances, *impact* seems essentially necessary, and is generally visible; and where it is not visible (as in gravitation, magnetism, light, &c.) it is nevertheless supposed to take place.

The junction, then, of *two* material substances, at least, is requisite to these appearances. And though *more* than two may be concerned in them; yet, as we can in the mind separate a greater number into *pairs*, and as the chief particulars and distinctions which belong to the subject before us (or, at least, which relate to this inquiry) may be laid down with reference to *two* substances, more than two will seldom be mentioned.

Now the appearances produced by the impulse or contact of two bodies, or material substances, admit of these various considerations.

DISTINCTION

1. They *mutually* affect each other. Thus, the axe *cleaves* the wood, and the wood *blunts* the axe.

2. This mutual affection produces in *each* substance *more than one* of the above-named appearances. Thus, besides the injury done to the *edge*, the *motion* of the stroke is impeded or stopped, and the metal exhibits some degree of *warmth*, and is made to produce a *sound*. As to the wood, it is *cut* or *divided* into parts; these parts also receive *motion*, exhibit *warmth*, and yield *sound*.

3. As the appearances just noted arise from the impact of the *stroke* [it being indifferent whether the axe be struck into the wood, or the wood against the axe] in reference to *it*, *each act* of these appearances may be conceived *effects*, [or only an *effect*, taking them in *union*] and the

stroke the *cause*; and in this light the appearances may be termed *reciprocal effects*. But,

4. If we consider the axe in the hand of its user as an instrument intended to produce a certain alteration in the wood, then the *axe* may be called *a cause*, and the separation of the wood, &c. *its effect*; and this being the most ordinary idea of cause and effect, the words need no prefixes of distinction.

5. Taking the action of the instrument in this light, we may conceive the *whole* of the cause as resulting from several NECESSARY concomitant causes, and the *whole* of the effect, as exhibiting *several* necessary concomitant effects. Thus, [without considering the *agency* of the user] the necessary concomitants of the *cause* last mentioned may be reckoned, the *motion* of the axe, its *kind* of metal, and the *form* of the parts, and the *places* where they rest.

6. Of these concomitant causes, some *one* may perhaps be properly considered as the *leading* or *efficient* cause (as it is sometimes called) on account of its being more *eminently* efficacious,—*prior* in the true order of our ideas, &c. and the

others as *subordinate*, in different degrees. The arrangement may, however, in many instances be hard to determine: But the conception is just; and the above-named component causes may be placed, as to consequence, as they stand, taking the last as the most inferior. A cause, therefore, may be thus said to consist of a *combination* of necessary causes; one termed *leading* or efficient, and each of the other parts, *assisting*, or *subordinate*. A like remark might be made with regard to the concomitant effects, and one called *principal*, and the others *accompanying*, or *subordinate*.

7. With regard to these necessary concomitant causes and effects, it may be further observed, that *some one* of the causes may often be said more particularly than *another* to have produced *some one* of the effects. Thus, the *number* of impressions of the axe in the wood may be attributed to the *number* of the strokes; the *smoothness* of the separated parts to the *edge* of the axe, and their *motion* to its *motion*, as efficient, or more eminent causes. But appropriations of this kind cannot always be satisfactorily made. For, to what mem-

ber of *the combined* cause can we particularly ascribe the *sound* of the wood?

8. When among these concomitant or combined causes there is one, which does not *inhere* in the instrument, it is called an *occasional cause*. Thus, the *direction* of the axe in a line leading to the wood, or, which is the same thing, the situation of the wood, in the direction of the axe, is an *occasional cause* of the effect produced by the axe; and,

9. When an occasional cause acts *unintentionally*; as if, by a knot in the wood, or a blow given to the user's arm, the axe should wound him, it is then properly termed an *accidental* [or *circumstantial*] *cause*.

10. An *effect* is sometimes termed an *action*. Thus, the *motion* produced in one of these separated pieces of wood (which might injure a by-stander, &c.) is properly called an *action*. And this leads us next to observe,

11. That as every cause (saving the *Divine Cause* of all things) may be thus taken as an effect of some other cause; when an effect is produced by the intervention of one or more causes be-

twixt it, and what is conceived the first cause, then that cause is termed *primary*, and the other, or others *secondary*. For example, the *hand* moves the *axe*; the axe separates the *wood*, and the *wood* strikes a *by-stander*. In this case, the hand is called the *primary* cause of the accident, and the axe, and the separated wood the *secondary causes*.

12. Those causes which operate by the established laws of nature, are named *physical causes*. Thus the *warmth* of the sun, which is a concomitant cause of the growth of wood, is a *physical cause*. And,

13. Those causes which exist in the mind of an *intelligent agent*, and are some way or other supposed to influence its actions, as *motives*, *desires*, *intentions*, &c. are, in contradistinction to *physical causes*, sometimes called *moral causes*; and also, as they have reference to an *end* or *design*, often (more properly) *final causes*. Thus, the final cause of a person's *cutting wood* might be to make it fuel for the fire.

14. It is likewise usual to call the *instrument* of the cause, and the *object* of the effect, *agent*

and *patient*; and, hence, to say, that things are *active* in what they *do*, and *passive* in what they *suffer*.*

Several other distinctions respecting cause and effect might be given, but these are perhaps more than sufficient for the present inquiry.

* In the solution of *iron* in *aqua fortis*, the menstruum, according to these ideas, is evidently the *agent*, and the metal the *patient*. But in the mixture of a *liquid acid* and *alkali*, this distinction is not discernible in the effervescence that ensues. In the latter case the *action* and *re-action* of the fluids are, to appearance, pretty nearly equal; but, in the former (though there *may* have been a slight alteration in the dissolvent) the re-action of the metal cannot be sensibly perceived.

CHAPTER 2.

Considerations respecting the POWERS *of natural Bodies.*

AT the time natural bodies are acting upon one another (as above described) we have a sensible proof of their having an ability or capacity to perform what we see them perform. And as in all similar instances we constantly find them to exhibit the same ability or capacity (if in the like circumstances) we conclude, that when *not* in act they nevertheless still have the ability, though it lie, as it were, in a state of dormancy. This ability to produce certain effects (or to *concur* in the production of them) is called *power*, and stands prior in the conception of the mind to its actual exertion, and is properly esteemed an inherent quality of substances, and to form part of their

complex ideas.* Thus the axe has a *power* or capacity of *separating* wood, and wood has the *power* or capacity of *separation* by the axe, since these powers carried into *act* always do separate the wood.

Now, with regard to these powers, it is plain, that, at the *instant* the axe touches or enters the wood, they are both in act, and concur, as it were, in producing the separation of the wood; but the first as a *cause*, and the other as an *effect*, since it was *primarily* owing to the stroke of the axe, that the separation took place. On this account the power of the axe is fitly termed *active*, and the power of the wood *passive*.†

Further. A weight has a power to move a piece of machinery, which machinery has a power of being moved by the weight; this machinery has the power of working a hammer, which hammer has a power of being wrought by the machinery; this hammer, again, has a power of sounding a bell, which bell has a power of being sounded

* Locke, B. II. Ch. 23. §. 7.

† Locke, B. II. Ch. 21. §. 2.

by the hammer. Now, when the bell sounds by this mechanism, and all the powers are in *act* or *energy*, it is evident, that the powers of the *machine* and *hammer* are to be esteemed both of the *active* and *passive* kind; the power of the machine being *passive* as to the power of the weight, and *active* as to the power of the hammer; while the power of the hammer is *active* as to the power of sounding the bell, and *passive* as to the power of the machinery. And, if we take the power of gravity as placed at *one* end of this series of powers, and consider the power of the vibration of the air that follows the power of the vibration of the bell [and which occasions the *sensation* of sound] as placed at the *other* end, we may say, that both the power of the weight, and power of sounding of the bell are active and passive; and hence, that *all* the powers we have named in the process are both active and passive. Indeed, as causes and effects are but powers in act, in like manner as we account a series of *secondary causes* both causes and effects, we may account a series of *secondary powers* (as they may be called) both active and passive.

From these considerations it appears, that in the production of any mechanical effect, besides the cause (or combination of causes) existing in the *agent*, there is another very material cause (or combination of causes) concerned, existing in the *patient*, and when mentioned with reference to each other, the former may be denominated *actuating*, and the latter *inherent*.

And were we to consider in any effect, whether of these concurring causes (or their powers) might be properly accounted pre-eminent, or more efficacious in its production, I fancy (contrary, perhaps, to what will appear true on the first glance) that this superiority should be given to the *inherent* one, or that of the *patient*. For, though both causes are *essentially necessary* to the effect, it may nevertheless more properly be said, that though the effect CANNOT be produced without the *actuating* cause, yet it COULD NOT be produced without the *inherent* cause, than, on the contrary, it can be said, that though the effect CANNOT be produced without the *inherent* cause, yet it COULD NOT be produced without the actuating cause. Nor does a comparison of the hum-

ble idea of *passiveness*, with the higher one of *activeness*, yield any thing to invalidate the conclusion, since, in a *mechanical* light, causes are to be estimated by their effects, and not by their mere *logical* conceptions. Besides, were we but to trace any of these causes (or powers) ~~but~~ a step further (as is done above in the instance of the machine) we should find them all both *active* and *passive* at the same time, and hence all put upon a *par* with regard to *this* consideration. The circumstance of *passiveness* in the inherent cause, it must, however, be observed, places the *time* of the happening of any effect, or whether it shall happen *at all*, in the hands, as it were, of the *actuating* cause.—But this is no interesting part of our inquiry, and with a few more instances respecting physical powers, on which the reader may form his own opinion of the matter, and with two other *distinctions*, we shall conclude the present section.

Through the medium of light an *object* (under proper circumstances) has a power of producing an *image* in a looking-glass; and a looking-glass has a power of forming an image of an object;

in which case the object is agent, and the mirror patient.

Again. From some inexplicable law, a loadstone (properly circumstanced) has a power of making a needle, hung upon a pivot, turn towards it; and a needle hung on a pivot has a power of turning towards a loadstone; where the magnet is agent, and the needle patient.

Again. An orifice in the side of a reservoir of water has a power of letting the water flow out of it; and water in a reservoir has a power of flowing through an orifice in its side; in which case the orifice is agent, and the water patient.

Now, in the manner we analyzed the cause mentioned in *distinction* 5, of the preceding chapter, we might separate the *inherent cause* so often insisted on in this, into its component parts; and with reference to the last instance of the reservoir of water, both the actuating and inherent causes may be decomposed thus:—The components of the *actuating* cause may be reckoned the *size* of the orifice, its *place* as to height, and its *aspect* as to the horizon. And the components of the *inherent* cause may be esteemed the *pressure* of the

water, (owing to its gravity) its *fluidity*, and its *tenacity*.

What are the real physical *properties* belonging to any *thing* or *substance*, it is not possible for mankind fully to discover. But though, in most instances, what we know of them is comparatively small, we may easily see, that they will consist of the *sum-total* (or *union*) of their *passive* and *active* capacities, of their *inherent* and *actuating* causes. These are the appropriate attributes which distinguish things from one another, and (however they may be *connected* in the exhibition of these attributes) gives them a proper individuality in the system of nature.

These preliminary remarks, and the above respecting cause and effect, may perhaps (as before observed) be of use to some readers in perusing the following pages. They are indeed only cursory, and perhaps immethodical; but on subjects, which abound with distinctions, and lead to many of the most refined intricacies of science, what can be said or done in a little room?

CHAPTER

3.

On the MENTAL PROCESS *which leads to* HUMAN AGENCY.

AS what relates to the mind is best understood by a careful survey of its frame and procedure, let us see what exists, or takes place in it previous to our actions.

We experience, that external objects have a power of producing *sensations* in the mind, and that the mind has a power of having *sensations* produced in it by external objects; next, that these *sensations* have a power of immediately raising *ideas* in the mind, and that the mind has a power of having *ideas* immediately raised in it by these *sensations*. Again [for our welfare and preser-

vation] we experience that these *ideas* * have a power of producing in the mind certain *desires*, (generally called *motives*) and, *è contra*, that the mind has a power of having certain *desires* produced in it by these *ideas*. Further, we observe [for the end of attaining what we desire] that these *desires* † have a power of producing a *determination* of the mind to undertake some of its variety of *acts*, (which determination is formed by a faculty usually called the *will*) and, reciprocally,

* Though, as we advance in life, these mental processes may only take their rise from *ideas*, yet, since ideas *originally* come from objects, it is fit in this inquiry to produce the whole chain of the procedure together. [See LOCKE, B. II. Ch. 1. §. 2, 3, 4, 5.]

† The word *desire* in this inquiry is put rather *technically*, after LOCKE, and is supposed to mean, a *liking* or *wish of attainment* or *enjoyment* respecting the *known* or *imagined* properties of an *object*. [See LOCKE, B. II. Ch. 20. §. 6. —Also Ch. 21. §. 33, 34, 43, and other parts of this chapter on POWER.] 'Tis thus a *desire* becomes a *motive* to action; which word is perhaps the more significant of the two for the step of the procedure in which it stands, as it may take in the *opposite* of desire (i. e. *aversion*) and every conceivable inducement to any conceivable act.

that the mind has a power of coming to a *determination* to undertake some of these acts on account of these *desires*. Finally, we perceive, that the mind thus *determined* as to the undertaking of an act, has (within the limits prescribed by its nature *) a power of carrying the determination into execution, whether it relate to some *mental* operation, or to the *movement* of our bodily organs.

Now, this process, we may observe, is formed of *active* and *passive* powers; causes *actuating*, and causes *inherent*, in the manner of those described in the above section respecting the sounding of a bell by a piece of mechanism. But we must note, that the nature of the powers which are *here* principally concerned, differs much from that of all the powers *there* concerned; and which difference we must now take a little into consideration.

Of the leading pair of corresponding powers, *i. e.* the active power of the *object*, and the passive power of the produced *sensation*, it is to be ob-

* That human power is limited, and in what manner and degree is too easy to conceive to need explanation.

served, that the first of them belongs to a *foreign* substance, or something *without* us, while the latter, as a possession of the mind, belongs to *ourselves*; on which account it may be properly called a *self*-power. But there is another more important reason why the term *self* may be particularly applied to the latter power. Though every power is undoubtedly a *self*-power, with respect to the thing to which it belongs, whether it be *animate* or *inanimate*, yet the *animate* has this further attribute of appropriation, that it is not only *conscious* of the *possession* and *use* of its powers, but can *in some way or other* (as will be described farther on) *apply* or *direct* them to its *own* purposes. Powers of this kind, therefore, differ much from those of mere machinery. With these ideas, then, of a *self*-power in view, we proceed to specify the nature of the remaining particulars contained in the process.

In the next pair of powers, namely the *now* active power of sensation just mentioned, and the passive power in the mind to have an idea raised in it by sensation, the latter of them (or the power of the idea) as belonging to the mind, must, for

the above reason, be an underived *self*-power; and hence, both the powers are underived *self*-powers. In like manner, the active and passive powers, which, when in energy, raise *desires* or *motives*, and these again which produce a *determination* or *will*, must be *self*-powers. And if the last ACTION of the mind that follows this *determination*, be of the *mental* sort (as *reasoning*) then are the reciprocating powers of the action wholly *self*-powers; if of a *corporeal* sort (as *writing*) then only the active power of the mind is a *self*-power, and that of the corporeal patient a *foreign* one.

That is, in short, of the chain of powers that succeed each other, from the original *object* of sensation down to the *self*-motive power of the mind, commonly called *spontaneity*,* the *first link*

* That the Divine Author of all things may communicate to his creatures a *self-motive* power seems as evident, as that he can communicate any other attribute or quality; and our feelings prove irresistibly that we are endowed with it.—This spontaneity (which all animals possess in some degree or other) occasionally produces a quantity of motion in the world, which, if neither great nor lasting, compared with that generated by the laws of nature, is nevertheless of the utmost consequence to the purposes of life.

only has its power in a *foreign* substance. So that, in the power of producing *sensations*, of forming *ideas*, of raising *desires*, of fixing *determinations* in the mind, and of the spontaneity (or self-motion) of the mind *acting* either mentally or corporeally, are all *self*-powers,* internally subsisting of themselves in the *soul*, or the essence of *life* and *perception*.

* Dr. PRIESTLEY seems to have a particular dislike to any powers of the mind being called *self*-powers; especially those of *the determination of the will*, and *spontaneity*. He would not have them so named, because they require the aid of something else to bring them into action. Whether the term *self* be, or be not, in strictness properly applied in this case, the idea of it above given, I believe, contains all that the advocates of Free-will wish to have understood by it; and I cannot think their cause requires more. Though the Doctor takes care to *intimate* in all *manners*, as well as to teach *directly*, that Freedom can only exist where there is *independence* and *unconnectedness* of every conceivable kind, yet, I flatter myself, this notion will be found perfectly false, and foreign to the inquiry.—Be this, however, as it may hereafter appear, agreeably to these ideas, whenever he meets with *the self*-power *of determination*, and *spontaneity* mentioned by his opponents, he either denies that

To illustrate this process by an example. A *fine morning* occasions certain *sensations* in the mind; which sensations produce *ideas* of its beauties; which ideas raise a *desire* to enjoy it; which desire is succeeded by a *determination* to

there are such powers, or, if he accept the term, he puts his own meaning upon it of *determining* or *moving* WITHOUT *motives*, &c. and then treats it as chimerical and impossible. If this account of the matter be right (as it appears to be) such representations seem to have more a tendency to decoy the mind from the true principles of Liberty, than to discover them. But let the reader form his opinion for himself. [As to the first of the particulars, see *Treat. on Necess.* p. 32, 70, 72, II. *Let.* to Mr. PALMER, p. 5. *Corresp.* with Dr. PRICE, p. 145, and several other places; but particularly note the description he gives of his imaginary *son B* in *Sect.* VII. of the *Treatise*.—As to the second particular, see *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, p. 96, 356, and *Corresp.* p. 85, 129, 145, 241, 395, &c.—All these tracts are edition the first.

The reader is desired to remember, that, as references to paticular parts of this author were not originally intended and preserved, those that are given here, and in other places, are probably neither complete, nor the most pertinent that might be collected. They are however supposed sufficient for the intended purpose.]

walk in the fields; which determination to walk in the fields is followed by *actually* walking in the fields. And, thus, the act of *walking* is brought about (through the medium of a process of the *faculties*, or powers of the mind, in energy) by the appearances of a fine morning. And thus, the self-motive power, or spontaneity of the mind, is invariably influenced in the acts of *reasoning*, *judging*, *contemplating*, *writing*, *speaking*, and, in short, the numberless other operations which are performed by *thinking* and *bodily motion*.

Though we have thus deduced the chain of mental powers from the highest link, or that of sensation received from external *objects*, it will not be needful, I presume, in the question concerning Liberty and Necessity to go farther back than to that of *motives*. For all the merits of it are supposed to lie in properly reasoning about the nature of these *three* links; namely, the *prevailing motive*, *the will to act*, and *the action that succeeds*, as they contain the self-power of self-motion [or spontaneity] so much concerned in the controversy, and those powers which immediately influence it. Of this the reader will see the

reason as he goes along. And I shall only observe farther here, that the above process seems to be truly (though rather tediously) deduced, and that it is the *basis* of the chief arguments of the partizans both for and against Human Liberty; of whose different manners of considering the subject we now proceed to give some account.

CHAPTER 4.

The Doctrine of what is called PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY *explained, in shewing, not only that nothing is done without a Motive, but that, from the above Process, it follows, that a Person under the same Circumstances of Mind and external Appearances of Things would always form the same Volition from the same Motive, and do the same Act.*

THIS will easily be seen by examining the process step by step.

In any number of supposed instances, if the *external* appearances of things be precisely the same, and the *frame* of the mind on which they operate precisely the same, they must always occasion precisely the same *sensations*. This is a

truth of the most obvious sort. For, except the previous circumstances can be at once both the same and not the same, no cause of difference in the resulting sensations can be found.—For a similar reason, if the *sensations* be the same (the mind continuing the same by the supposition) they must raise the same *ideas*, and, in like manner, the same ideas must excite the same *desires*, and the same desires fix the same *will*, or *volition*, and the same will, or volition, produce the same *act*. All this appears as evident, and would as certainly be the case, as it is evident and certain, that the same mechanical effects would always follow from a series of precisely the same *material* causes; nothing being able to prevent an identical effect in either instance, but a change in the laws of nature by divine interference.—Thus (to allude to a former example) the same *person* in the same *morning* would always be induced to take the same *walk*.

This conclusion is denied, or at least admitted with hesitation by several, on *two* accounts, which are easily shewn to be fallacious.

It is objected, in the first place, that there may

be many desires, or motives, existing in the mind at the same time, which tend to counteract one another, or influence the will, as it were, different ways, and this with such apparently equal force, that the *choice* by which the will is fixed, as to a subsequent act, becomes merely *arbitrary*, or entirely dependent upon the will itself, which then acts regardless of motives.

In answer to this it should be observed, that though the mind may in many such cases with difficulty determine how to act, yet, that there was a prevailing motive when it did act, a nice observation of its procedure would as certainly discover in the instance before us as in others more apparent.* All that is singular in this case, is, the intervention of a new act of *choosing* preparative

* On this point it has been asserted (by an ingenious annotator, perhaps too much biased to the hypothesis of his author) that we often act where we do not know a motive for it; and that, not to know a motive is not to have one. This conclusion rests upon a supposition, that the mind *always* (at least for a short interval of time) consciously *sees*, and *retains* the remembrance of its minutest movements; which the frequent opportunities we have of discovering our

to the taking place of the act more particularly in view; which act of choosing was *willed* by the mind in consequence of its embarrassed situation, and which would continue till it saw, or fancied it saw, either a preference of weight in one of the combating motives, or found a decided motive in some other idea brought into the mind by ordinary succession.

The other objection, and which will be still easier to refute, is, that we have it in our power to will and act in *spite*, as it were, of any desire or motive at all. This is certainly true as to a *given* motive. But then, it must be considered (and on which consideration the doctrine attempted to be established wholly rests) that the act which thwarts this motive is not done on *no* account, or for *no* reason. *It* has a motive, (i.e. the desire of counteracting the *given* motive) and the subsequent act shews it to be a prevailing one according to the theory.

general imbecillity in the act of recollection and nicety of discernment in things considerably palpable, I think, sufficiently disprove. See *Eng. edit. of King's Origin of Evil, Note* 53, *Ch.* 5. *Sect.* 1. *Subs.* 5.

To illustrate this by an example, if what is so plain need an example. A person has several sorts of wine set before him; one he esteems the most healthy, another the most palatable, and a third is a sort he has not tasted: he may, therefore, for a moment (if he have not previously settled the point as his general rule) debate within himself which he will drink. But, which soever he choose, it will be in consequence of a motive. If the wine esteemed healthy, then it is because he prefers health to mere gratification; if the palatable, then because he prefers present gratification to health; if that which is new to him, then because he prefers the gratification of curiosity to both the other considerations. But supposing the subject of *philosophical necessity* were then in debate, and he, thinking to shew his *freedom of choice*, should pitch upon the wine of a bottle, of the quality of which he had not been informed, and which only happened to stand next him on the table,—still it will be found he was influenced by a motive. For the very desire to shew his *freedom of choice* was a motive which incited him to take this undescribed wine; and the particular bottle would be pitched upon in

consequence of some idea, with which its place was associated, &c.—Either he would take that next him, the more to avoid the appearance of choosing, or he would take a second, because it was *not* next him, or the third, because there were three in company, or on some other account equally trivial, but which would become a prevailing motive alike valid with those of more reasonable desert.

As objections of a more philosophical kind, it has been urged, that motives cannot influence our actions in the way of cause and effect, as laid down above, since there is no *similitude* between a motive and a mechanical cause, nor any necessary connexion between a motive and its ascribed effect. To this it is replied, that all the reason we have for saying any effect is owing to any cause is from our constantly perceiving it to follow *from* that cause. And as we observe actions to succeed motives as invariably, as heat follows from fire, (or any other mechanical effect follows its cause) we are as well, and on the *same* grounds authorized to say, that the one is an established law of *nature* as the other, and to account their

connexion to be equally certain. This reasoning Dr. PRIESTLEY has placed in the most satisfactory point of view. And, indeed, the *natural* influence of motives, when carefully considered, will perhaps be found the most obvious case of *causality* with which we are acquainted.

A like reply may be made to any kindred objections, founded on the essential difference between *matter* and *spirit*, and to the *quibble* which asks, how an *abstract notion* can move *substance?*

All this granted, we see, that the will is always influenced by motives, and that definite circumstances of the mind and external things must needs lead through definite volitions to definite acts. And hence, were we to suppose the same man to enter into life again at the same point of time (supposing the interference of Providence in every respect to be the same) his series of actions would be precisely the same. And not only this would be the case, but were the world itself to commence anew exactly as it has done, the concatenation of actions arising from the mechanical laws of matter, and human agency, both separately

considered, and as woven together in the mass of events, would be precisely the same.

In short, the *certain* connexion, as cause and effect, between motives and actions, is so evident, that I am persuaded, if the truth of man's Free-agency must be built upon the ruins of this theory, it will never be established.

Such I apprehend is a just account of what is called the doctrine of PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY; which, though it leaves us at *liberty* to do what we *will* or *please*, *appears* to make *that will and pleasure* perfectly *necessary*, or the instrument of Fate.

CHAPTER 5.

Four PROPOSITIONS *farther Illustrative of the Theory of the Mind, and proving that the Will is* FREE.

THOUGH the representation just given of the rise of human actions is the truth, it is not the *whole* truth; and it now becomes us, as candid inquirers, if not as zealous advocates for man's Free-agency, to examine it with a little more attention. For this purpose it will be better to attempt what is here intended under distinct heads, or *Propositions*, than to lay it down in a more connected manner.

Proposition I.

That the NATURE *of the Will, or whether it be Free or Necessary, must be determined solely from an Examination into its Qualities, as an*

Inherent Cause, and not from its Connexion with Motives.

HAD we not found it proved by the *fact*, one would scarce have imagined, that any philosopher should have entertained an idea, that it could be made a question, whether man be *free*, and thought at the same time, that what is *free* must be wholly *independent* and *unconnected*. For such a *detachedness*, as it may be called, it is plainly as vain to seek, as it is evidently incompatible with the nature of things. For, whatever exists must have some kind of relation to some other thing, and be in some sort under its influence. Can we conceive the Deity himself (I speak it, however, with due reverence and distrust) possessed of such a situation? Must he not act in some sort from motives? and is it not from what he has *done* that he becomes known to us? Respecting any thing *derived*, however, we see it stands evidently between two correlatives; between something which somehow influences it, and something which it somehow influences in its turn.

Now, though all things be thus *concatenated*,

every individual thing has within itself qualities and powers, that are really *distinct* and appropriate; and, as was observed at the close of chapter *second*, it is evidently *those* qualities alone which constitute its nature, and from which it can be justly characterized. That is, to inquire into the properties of any thing is to inquire, what are its qualities as a *patient* and *agent*; what characterizes it when considered as an *inherent*, and as an *actuating cause*. The properties of things, though *discovered* by some leading actuating cause, to which they are passive, and some subsequent inherent cause, to which they are active, do not *proceed* from these extraneous circumstances; they are something derived from the essence of their own substance, and would exist were every thing else annihilated.

This considered, is it not making a very bold and unphilosophical inference to say at once, as some do, that because the Will is actuated by motives, it must therefore be necessary? Is it not clear, that this point must be decided by an inquiry into the *nature* of the Will; and that it is the *manner* in which motives influence it, and

not the mere *fact*, that they do so, on which its Freedom or Necessity depends. An *act* and the *mode* of it, a motive *followed* and *how* it is followed, are two very different things. A due consideration of what is here, and above, suggested, I think proves this sufficiently. And if we had not every just ground to say, prior to the inquiry, that, from the nature of things, the Will might follow motives either in a manner that is *free*, or one that is *necessary*, the very question in dispute has afforded a kind of *practical proof* of it, as it shews it to have been the opinion of the first writers in philosophy.* But it may not be amiss to illustrate the point farther by an example or two; in which (as it is all that is needful in the present case) we

* It is mostly allowed, and very apparent, that LOCKE writes on the present subject with great confusion and inconsistency. And one of his lapses into a censurable position seems to be when he attempts to shew, Sect. 14. of his Chapter on POWER, that it is altogether as improper and insignificant a question to ask if a man's Will be *free*, as to ask if his sleep be *swift*, or his virtue *square*. To this, if any one wish to see a reply, a pertinent one may be found in WATTS's *Philosophical Essays*, Ess. XII. Sect. 5. In

shall only consider the Will as an *inherent cause*, or as it stands related to the influencing motive.

The *actuating cause* of the explosive property of gunpowder is fire; but the *inherent* one (or that which characterizes it) exists in the powder, and, according to some theories, is owing to the release of air, and to others, to a repulsive power between the sulphur and nitre.

Now in like manner, as it might be a question whether of these opinions is the true one, so it might be debated, whether the Will is free or necessary. In the case of the gunpowder, the circumstance of ignition is taken into the account in both solutions; and so in the case of the Will, the influence of motives is supposed to obtain, of what kind soever its volitions are. And, as it might rationally be asked, whether the explosion of gunpowder by fire is owing to the release of air, or to the repulsion between sulphur and nitre; so it might be a question, when the Will follows a mo-

the mean time let *common sense* consider the *impropriety* of asking if gunpowder be *wise*, and the *propriety* of asking if it be *strong*, and it will lead to the distinction which this great author's refinement had overlooked

tive, whether it follow it in a way that ought to be deemed free, or in one that ought to be deemed necessary. In like manner also it might be considered, whether *thinking* be the effect of a *material*, or *immaterial cause* or *substance*, without considering how the ideas of things are connected with external objects; which might be supposed *somehow* to take place on both suppositions, and from which mere circumstance, therefore, nothing could be inferred in proof of either opinion. But parallel instances may be found in a number of philosophical subjects, and it must be needless to adduce any more.

On the whole, then, if this representation of the matter be right; if, whether the Will be free or necessary, must be determined from an examination into the nature of its *inherent cause* (as seems too palpable to admit of doubt) how egregiously have the Necessitarians stumbled at the out-set of their theory, when they tell us, as they often do, that the being influenced by motives is the *great hinge* * on which the doctrine of Necessity turns,

* Vide Note p. 315 of *the Correspondence*.

and that, without it can act independent of them it cannot be free.*

* In allowing the invariable influence of motives some advocates of Freedom appear to have thought, they were giving up their cause, and have contended for a *natural* or *physical* INDIFFERENCE in the Will, and attempted to construct theories accordingly. One of these teaches, that the bare *pleasure* of exercising this power in volition is superior to that of any motive or appetite; that it does not chuse things because they please, but that they please merely because they are chosen; and that on this account, they become the true *cause* of our actions, and have the fairest opportunity of making *Free-agency* the source of our intended happiness.

In like manner as bodily *action* is agreeable, independent of the cause of our motion, these *arbitrary* volitions may be agreeable independent of a motive; but I fancy, on due examination, this opinion will not be found to be so apparent in itself, nor so necessary in establishing man's Free-agency, as is supposed by its ingenious author, and still more ingenious annotator. Besides the many direct objections that might be brought against it, one of great force is, that we do not *experience* this power of indifference in such an *extraordinary* manner as we ought to do, to agree with what is alledged. See *Eng. ed. of King's Origin of Evil, Ch. 5. Sect. 1. Subs. 3. 5. and the Notes.*

In the main, this doctrine is a most evident *begging of the question*; and though it seem plausible, and is not easy to detect by hasty writers, I fancy enough has been said to shew, that nothing could have been set up as a test more vague, than that of unavoidable *motive*-influence; that when this favourite point is allowed, the question in debate is still to answer, and must be decided by *other* properties of the Will; to a further examination of which we now proceed.

CHAPTER 6.

The Subject continued.

Proposition II.

That the Will possesses an ACTIVE *Power of a Sort very different from that of any other Faculty of the Mind, and which is the Basis of Free-agency.*

TO illustrate this we must, once more, trace the procedure of the mind down the *five* links, which have been before considered, i. e. the powers and energies of *sensation*, *ideas*, *desire*, *will*, and *action*.

The *sensation* raised in the mind by an *object* must needs be (according to its nature) of an *individual* sort, as the faculty of sensation is totally *passive* to it, and without power either to refuse or change it. The same may be said of the *ideas*

that follow from this *sensation*, and the *desire* that succeeds these *ideas*; they must be precisely one and the same, as long as the object from which they flow continues the same.* But in the next step of the procedure, from *desire* to *willing*, or *volition*, (as it may in this place be better termed) we shall find a remarkable change. Here the faculty of the *Will* which produces the *volition* is *active*,† and of such a nature, that though there *should* be reasons why a particular and definite volition must take place (as will be discussed in the next proposition) yet at the same time it *might* have been of another kind. That is, granting the preceding steps of the process were the very same, and the

* Of this *passive* kind is the faculty of *Judgment*. It can only perceive things *as they are*. And yet Dr. PRIESTLEY argues that the Will and Judgment have *a remarkable resemblance* of each other; that there is no *essential* difference between them, and that their chief distinction lies in the first relating to *actions*, and the latter to *opinions*. [*Treat. on Necess.* p. 33. II. *Let.* to Mr. PALMER, p. 21.]

† *Active* and *passive*, here, the reader will observe, are not to be taken in the mere *logical* sense frequently mentioned before (and explained in *Distinct.* 14. of Chap. 2.) but as strictly and *philosophically* so.

object from which they arose the same, this definite volition, from the native power of the Will, *might* have been, in the nature of things (did no other property or circumstance of the Will prevent it) not only *contrary* to the preceding desire, but in conformity to *any other* desire, however inferior in force, or from whatever other object it arose. Of the three leading steps *sensation*, *ideas*, and *desire*, we say, in reference to the given object, and to one another, that they COULD NOT be different from what they are, their native powers being all of the *passive* kind, and unable to do any thing more than produce an individual effect. But of the *volition* that follows the desire, by which it is made definite, we may say that it COULD be different from what it is, as it proceeds from a power endued with *native* ACTIVITY.

This singular property of the Will is much noticed by the writers in behalf of *Liberty*; and CLARKE says, that *Action* and *Freedom* are synonymous terms.* It is undoubtedly the *basis*, or

* See *Ans. to Let. I. at the end of his Correspondence with* LEIBNITZ, and other places of his writings on the subject.

fundamental principle of *Freedom* (as *passivity* is of *Necessity*) and is often thus briefly conceived and represented. But how it operates, or is concerned in forming volitions; or what is the portion of the mental process, which may be said more *immediately* to constitute them *free*, is attempted to be shewn in the next proposition.

Having now fully described the nature and order of the *five* particulars of the chain which leads to human action, it may assist the reader's imagination to see them all laid down in the manner of the following scheme; which is of too simple a form to need any explanation.

ACTUATING CAUSES.
Material Object
Power of Sensation.
Sensation
Power of Ideas.
Ideas
Power of Desire.
Desire
POWER OF VOLITION.
VOLITION
POWER OF ACTION.
ACTION
INHERENT CAUSES.

CHAPTER 7.

The Subject continued.

Proposition III.

That the Will also possesses a Power, by which it is enabled (through the Medium of certain auxiliary Motives, if they be wanted) to form a Volition in Favour of any assigned Motive of the Number, which may exist in a Case of Deliberation and Choice. OR, *in other Words, That the Will is endowed with a Property of* SO *varying and fixing its Volitions, as entitles it to be deemed strictly* FREE.

THIS *inherent* power, founded upon the above named *activity*, will be best illustrated by an example.

Suppose (in allusion to a former instance) a person has the choice of three sorts of wine offer-

ed him; one of which best pleases his palate; another he thinks most healthy; and a third is recommended on account of its novelty. Now, in this case, is it not a fact, that the person has it in his power to take or refuse *any of them?* that is to say, is he not able to accomplish a volition in some manner or other (whether by a kind of artifice, or any other method, is not material) that will terminate in the assigned choice or rejection? This must be granted. It must be allowed, that the Will is not *actually* confined in its volition of choice to any particular wine. Let the person suspend his judgment ever so long, consider it ever so maturely, he will be as sure (and a looker on as sure) that he can form a volition in favour of any of them, as that he has power to lift it to his head. And does not this INHERENT property of the Will carry evident and satisfactory signs of *Freedom* in it? Certainly it is not *necessary.* And I think it will be a harder task than that of our present inquiry to discover a species of action, which is *neither* free nor necessary. The negation of *one* of these opposed attributes, it is presumed, implies the existence of the *other.* And if we

compare the above-named property with any thing in the *material* world (or, indeed, in the *mental*) we shall find them not only *different* from, but manifestly the *reverse* of each other; as much so as the *Activity* and *Passivity* on which they rest. In the case of a piece of machinery (or the action of matter on matter) with which we are intimately acquainted, we can, from a view of circumstances, infallibly pronounce *before* trial, what action will take place *on* the trial; which plainly manifests an INHERENT attribute of *Necessity* in what is acted upon. But here, in the case before us, such a prediction is impossible. Any volition thus previously pointed out, may be set aside, and another adopted in its place. And this *reverse* circumstance to the other, arising, as we have said above, from an INHERENT property of the Will, is, we presume, a genuine mark of its *Liberty*; and, without more words, sufficient for the conviction of a competent inquirer, that the proposition is true.* Indeed, what ingredients some may imagine needful to constitute Freedom of

* The main particulars of this reasoning are further enlarged upon in Chap. 12.

Will, it is impossible to say; as the demands of refinement, as well as of ignorance, may outgo all due minuteness of explanation and research. But that from the single attribute just mentioned, (i. e. of its being able actually to concur with, or set aside the influence of any motive by the assistance of some other) we ought to assign freedom to our volitions, will, I have hopes, appear more and more satisfactory, to *every* reader, as we proceed in the inquiry. In the mean time let us consider the force of the following observation.

The mind is as conscious that its volitions are formed in the *manner* just now described, as that it forms them *at all*; and all that has been supposed to injure the idea of perfect Freedom suggested to common apprehension in such an example as the above, is, the consideration of the choice being determined by a *motive*; and that it would always be *definite in definite circumstances*. But the former of these particulars we *have* already shewn to contain in it nothing *necessitating*, and the same *will* be proved of the latter in the next proposition. The proof, then, of the Liberty of the Will given in this proposition, appears, not

only satisfactory in itself, but to stand exempt from the force of the two capital objections produced by the Necessitarians as destructive of our doctrine, and as substantial evidence of their own. Hence we might here have closed the present head; but as there are some other particulars either farther illustrative of, or otherwise allied to what precedes, which may be of use in clearing up the subject, the chapter is lengthened with what follows.

1. We have mentioned, above, the assistance of *auxiliary* motives in forming a volition of choice, by which is meant, only, such motives as may arise from something, that might happen to be said with regard to the forming of the *choice*; as that the person *durst not*, *could not*, *would not*, &c. take *this*, *that*, or *the other* sort of wine, &c. which circumstance would undoubtedly be the source of *fresh* motives. But, still, as they are but motives, they have nothing in them more *necessitating* than the other *principal* or common ones (as we may *here* call them for the sake of distinction) which are mentioned above. And should there be any volition, or volitions, formed

in the business previous to that of the expected choice, they must be free, if it can be proved, that the ultimate one is free, which is more immediately before us. For a mental process of this kind only *multiplies* volitions, but does not *change* their nature.

2. Perhaps it may open these ideas a little more, should it do nothing strictly to confirm them, to introduce this comparison.

Imagine, in a piece of machinery, a wheel to be moved by a pinion; this movement we must term *necessary*, and allow it to depend on the *single* train of secondary causes to which the pinion happened to be connected. But suppose, that the wheel were a *living* wheel, and, of a number of pinions which stood immediately around it, it had the power to *will* to be moved by any one of them in particular, and so to derive its motion from *any* of the trains of secondary causes to which they were joined, would not this be a property essentially different from that of the dead wheel? and, while we called the first *necessary*, could we do other than call the latter *free?*

3. Allowing, as we have readily done in a fore-

going chapter,* that motives are the *causes* of our volitions, it may be observed to us here, that we are now arguing for a Cause having a *free* EFFECT; which, on the face of it, has always been thought an absurdity. It is no matter how things appear to cursory observation, when they are capable of being shewn in a more accurate light; and we are persuaded, however paradoxical it may appear to some, that we have above fully manifested, that there is a *species* of Cause which has a *free* Effect, and that it exists in the intellectual process which leads to our volitions.

But if we consider the nature of things closely and properly, why should such a cause be thought incredible? Every thing rests on the basis of its own nature, and must be derived from that nature according to its own peculiar laws. *Algebraic Notation* has naturally its *negative* quantities; and, what would still be less imagined, the product of two of them becomes *positive*. The mathematics indeed afford a number of truly paradoxical problems, which are perfectly demonstrable.

* Chap. 4.

But a case the most applicable to that in question, (because a metaphysical one) is, of our being satisfactorily acquainted with two species of *Existence* so opposite in their natures, that one of them seems on the first glance to imply a contradiction. What I mean is the *Existence* of *created things*, and the *Existence* of the *Deity*; the one being *caused*, and the other *uncaused*. Now, do not these two kinds of existence differ as much from each other, as a *necessary effect* and a *free effect?* and does a *free effect* seem any more irreconcileable to our cursory conceptions, than an *uncaused existence?* Certainly not. How then can the glance of ordinary thought admit the one, and reject the other? But, as has been said, we are not referring things to ordinary thought. We persuade ourselves, that we have already proved in a manner sufficiently clear, that a *cause* MAY have a *free effect*, and that it is actually exhibited to us in the procedure of the Will.

4. *Common sense* and *cursory thought*, however (as is often noted) have their provinces in this inquiry; and I hope the reader has here anticipated the observation, that it is the property of the Will

we have just been describing (i. e. its being able in its volitions to follow, or refuse to follow, any *given* motive) which mankind at large have in view, when they form their opinion of the nature of human agency. Likewise, that, as it is the most *material* particular of the process of volition, so it is the most *distinct*, and (however it may be *bordered* with native darkness) sufficiently *clear* in its irradiations to be the star of *conscience* and *responsibility*.

In conclusion of this chapter, it may not be amiss just to mention the *essential* or *main* particulars of what we have now proved, respecting the nature of the Human Will.—We see that motives do not actuate it by *mechanical impulse*, but by way of *inducement* and *solicitation*;* that it possesses a peculiar ACTIVE faculty, or *inherent* Cause, which characterizes its volitions, that is not only *different* from, but *opposite* to the PASSIVE *inherent* Cause, which characterizes *mate-*

* This idea (with a slight change of the conception) is often properly enough expressed by saying, Desire is the *occasion* of the volition, but the Freedom of the Will its *efficient* cause.

rial movements; that it can *concur with* or *set aside* any *given* motive; and, hence, that whatever be the nature of the influence to which these volitions are subject, it is not real CONSTRAINT. This considered, (and even without recurring to what is *obviated* in the first proposition, and the third of these remarks, &c.) can we hesitate to pronounce the Will FREE, and grant that it possesses every quality which it could possibly be conceived to be possessed of to make it so? Surely not. We may now, I should think, admit the doctrine as fully proved, regardless of any *indirect* * arguments that might be brought against it. For truths established by *plain, regular* investigation, cannot have much to fear from objections founded on the mere subtleties of refinement, and the sophisms of ingenuity.

However, since the idea of Human Freedom (as intimated above) perhaps is not in common rightly fixed or understood, it may be proper, for

* Of this kind the argument refuted, as we presume, in the first of these propositions may be considered; and the *only remaining one* of consequence in the dispute, is answered in the proposition that follows.

the sake of some readers, to introduce a chapter or two more on the subject, the better to ascertain its true properties, and those of *Liberty* and *Necessity* in general.——In the mean time we proceed to another *obviating* proposition, and a *speculative* corrollary.

CHAPTER

8.

The Subject continued.

Proposition IV.

That, whether the Will be Free, or not Free, a definite Volition will always be formed in definite Circumstances. OR, *That from the Truth of a definite Volition being formed in definite Circumstances, no Proof can be drawn either that the Will is free or necessary.*

WITH regard to a volition formed in behalf of a *particular motive* of the several, that must more or less be supposed to solicit notice, it has been observed, chapter *fourth*, that, were the same option again presented to the same person, under every way the same circumstances, the Will would again be determined by that *particular motive*;

and so on for any number of trials. On due consideration this is very clear, and the reason short. For, if nothing be changed in the previous circumstances, or the cause, how should there be any change in those of the result, or the effect? it includes only what is called in logic, an *identical proposition.*

Now, the *certainty* of a *particular motive* always proving a *prevailing* one in such an imaginary trial, has been held by the writers who oppose Human Liberty, a conclusive argument in favour of their hypotheses. But as from what has been just stated (and the process given more at large in the beginning of chapter *fourth*) it appears, that this *certainty* is only founded on the mere circumstance of a motive being followed *at all* by the Will, and we have already shewn,* *that volitions being under the influence of motives* is no proof either that the Will is *free* or *not free*, of course, the *certainty* in question is no proof whether the Will be free or not free. All that can be inferred from it is, the truth of the present

* In the *first* of these propositions, Chap. 5.

proposition, or, that whether the Will be free or necessary, a definite volition will be formed in definite circumstances. And, paradoxical as it may appear, (and on which paradoxical appearance one half of this controversy is founded) I should think enough has now been said to shew, that *freedom of choice* will always follow a *particular* motive, and end in the *certainty* under notice.

But the subject may deserve a few more considerations.

As the principle, that brings this certainty to pass, has no reference to what the Will is within itself, but to its *sameness* of operation in the supposed repetitions, it is very easy to see, from its own nature, that it would equally take place in any imaginable form or situation of the Will as to Freedom and Necessity; whether constantly free, or constantly necessary, or partaking of both these qualities alternately, or in any sort of succession. It has no reference to the qualities of a *single* mental operation (which is sufficient to determine the *kind* of the connexion of *all* secondary causes) but arises from the comparison of *two* or *more* imagined to be carried on by precisely the same

laws, under precisely the same circumstances; and *must* therefore take place in both the abovenamed suppositions, and, indeed, in *any* other conceiveable mode of rational agency.

And here it may be proper to note, that it is on this ground it was concluded in the close of chapter *fourth*, without any fear of injuring Human Liberty by the concession, that were this system of things to commence again, and be influenced occasionally by Divine Providence, in the same manner it has been, at any given point of time, it would again be precisely in the same circumstances.*—All this indeed is little more than say-

* Among the many fabulous systems of the world invented by the heathen philosophers, there was one held by the *Stoics* (and perhaps some other sects) which has such a peculiar affinity to a conception of this kind, as to entitle it to some mention in a note.

They taught that the present frame of things only subsists for a certain period of time, called the *great year*, at the end of which it is destroyed by fire; that immediatly after this destruction, another world, exactly like it in every respect, proceeds, as it were, from its ashes, which is again at the end of the same period to be destroyed in the same manner, and that nature has eternally undergone this succession

ing, and allowing, that *identity* is *identity* equally in *action* as in *substance*, and in any mode of their *combination*.

WE have now laid down the *four propositions* which we presume constitute a *direct* proof of man's Free-agency.* And if the *first* and *fourth* of them be true, thy will, also, *invalidate* the most plausible of the arguments that are urged for the *necessity* of Human Action, and which figure away

of Renovation and Destruction, and will eternally continue to undergo it. They yet proceed to say, that the same *Socrates* and *Plato*, and every person else, would be again called into being; live with the same friends; experience the same warfare; and die the same deaths: and, indeed, talk on the subject in the very strain of the modern Necessitarians. The assumption, at the out-set, of these successive destructions and revivals of all things, is perfectly arbitrary and groundless; but, granting it to be true, the rest follows of course; and perhaps it is not always that the dogmas of these philosophers contain so good a *moiety* of truth.—*Vide Nemesius de Fato, Cap.* 38. *Origenes contra Celsum, Lib.* V. *Tatiani Oratio ad Græcos, Lib.* V. *Plutarch de Fato*, and several other places of these and other ancient authors.

[* Perhaps we might more properly say this of the *two* middlemost, as the *first* and *fourth* may be considered only as replies to objections.]

in some form or other on almost every page of its advocates. We shall find, contrary to what has been perpetually alledged, that *volitions* may be influenced by *motives*, and the Will not *necessary*;* that a *definite* volition may be always expected in *definite circumstances*, and the Will not *necessary*,† and that *certainty* of event may attend human actions, and the Will not be *necessary*.‡

* "If we only admit this undeniable fact, viz. that the will cannot properly determine *itself*, but is always determined by *motives*, that is by the present disposition of the mind, and the views of things presented to it, it cannot be any other than a *necessary* determination, subject to laws as strict and invariable as those of mechanics."

Dr. PRIESTLEY's Treat. on Necess. p. 72.

† Speaking of what makes a *necessary determination*, p. 17, of his Letter to Mr. BRYANT, Dr. PRIESTLEY says, "It is not that a man has no *will* at all, or that he cannot *do* whatever he wills or pleases; but that his volitions are *definite in definite circumstances*."

‡ The *certainty* here meant, Dr. PRIESTLEY always makes tantamount to *necessity*, and p. 14, of his II. Letter to Mr. PALMER, with reference to it, he says, "If I know my own principles, 'tis all I want, call it by what name you please."

[—But to quote all one meets with to the purpose of the

Also, the *link* of *necessity* apparently lying in the usual doctrine of *cause and effect*, and the *chain* contained in this almost proverbial saying, *the prevailing motive, the Will to act, and the action itself, all follow one another invariably*, will be seen to contain nothing in them unfavourable to Human Freedom. Yet to the apparent strength of these philosophic aphorisms it is owing, that the greatest part of the Necessitarians keep themselves in humour with their principles. For if, on the one hand, these sectaries happen to have a favourable opinion of the accuracy of metaphysical deductions, and, on the other, an unfavourable one of sentiments that may be traced to the nursery, the above maxims will appear with a conciseness and perspicuity, which may easily overpower suggestions of the mind that are too familiar to be striking, and set at nought a train of investigation more governed by common sense than refinement.

We may conclude this proposition, then, with

above *three* notes in the Doctor's writings on the subject, would be almost endless. 'Tis enough to observe here, that they specify the chief pillars on which he rests his theory.]

observing, that if the *imaginary* species of *coincidence* here noticed must be constituted into *necessity*, we may, by the same kind of argument, infer that any act that *is* done, *was* to be done, or is *necessary*, because it *is* done, as this conclusion is founded on the same ultimate principle of *identity* being *identity*; which not only begs the question, and confounds all distinctions, but would at once deprive the Deity himself of every pretension to Freedom, be his attributes what they may.

CHAPTER 9.

That probably every perceptive Being is endowed with Free Will;—On Moral Certainty, and the Nature of Divine Prescience.

GRANTING the Freedom of the Human Will to be satisfactorily proved in the foregoing chapters, as we presume it is, it follows (as a *corollary*) that *most probably* every being possessed of life and consciousness is free. For, if their intellectual faculties be formed in the same manner as our own; or, in other terms, if, as with us, their volitions be governed by motives,—however these faculties differ in degree of perfection, we can assign no good reason why they should differ in mode of operation, and that what we prove respecting the Liberty and Necessity of one of them, should not be held true of them all.

As to the *kind* or *nature* of intellectual procedure, it indeed would be highly presumptuous, as well as very irrational, in creatures like us, to insinuate, that it *may* not be greatly various in the various orders of beings, which God hath called into existence; because, in an infinity of cases, though we cannot conceive *how* a thing may be done, it is nevertheless easy for us to conceive, that it is *possible* to be done. The experience, however, which we have of the small portion of sensitive and living nature subject to our inspection, seems to shew, that it is all governed by motives in one uniform manner. And it may be noted here, by the bye, that on the grounds of this analogy, it has been often inferred, and held as a conclusion properly cogent, that the Divine Will must, like our own, be free.

All, then, that can with any shew of plausibility be objected to the inference in question, must be built upon one of the two following grounds; both of which, on a little examination, I presume will appear fallacious.

1. It may be said, as to the inferior animals, that since they have not a *moral sense* of right

and wrong, Freedom of Will in them does not seem to be wanted, and that therefore it does not probably exist. To which it is deemed sufficient to reply, that should Freedom of Will on *this* account be a superfluous faculty, it may not be so on *others*, which relate simply to the intellectual process; and that, though we believe it is generally in the plan of Divine Providence, instead of using a redundancy of principles to gain one end, to make one thing serve many purposes, we find it equally a part of that plan sometimes to make one end a sufficient motive for the use of very extraordinary means; and this end, as just observed, may be the mere procedure of intellection.—In short, the true state of the matter seems to be this; Freedom of Will appears to arise necessarily from the nature of the mind; and the *moral sense* which is given to men, and superior beings, only increases the range, or province of their motives, without having any effect at all on the faculty of volition.

2. The next objection is founded on the quality of the mind termed *Instinct*, which is sup-

posed to govern the actions of, at least, all the lower animals; and from which quality is supposed to proceed a species of automatical, or mechanical movement, or one that is of a kind strictly *necessary*.

To obviate the force of this suggestion, it may be observed, that *Instinct*, though often so called, is in reality no *distinct* faculty of any created mind, but what exists, more or less, in all. It is only a comparatively *strong* animal propensity to do a thing in consequence of an *innate* disposition, or *peculiar* organical conformation; something brought about in the intellect rather by *a change in the relative quantities* of the ordinary faculties, than the *addition* of a new one. Hence, though it leads to great promptness and uniformity of action, and seems to supersede the use of previous volition, yet it undoubtedly derives its determinations from motives, in the manner we have described.

On these accounts, then, we think it highly *probable*, that whatever has life and consciousness is free in its volitions.

AN instance in which a living agent is brought back *twice*, or oftener, into every way the same situation in order to see how it would act, cannot, in the nature of things, possibly take place. Perhaps the supposition is to the full as useless in theory, as it is irreducible to practice. What we have, therefore, to consider most in the enquiry concerning Human Liberty and Necessity, is the nature of *one* series of actions *never to return*. And to the observations already advanced on these heads, we may now add, that, as our actions are all thus determined by motives, and from experience we are pretty well acquainted with the disposition and propensities of human and other animal nature, there arises good grounds, in particular cases, for us to point out in what manner a given motive will operate, and hence to enable us to *assign one* with great certainty that will prove *prevailing*. Thus we may predict with little fear of mistake, that a hungry wolf would make towards the first flock of sheep that fell in its way, and that a lodger would endeavour to escape from a house on fire. This *certainty*, however, the reader will easily see, from what precedes, has

nothing in it (as some have imagined*) of proper *necessity*; it being very evident, that if the influence of motives be allowed compatible with freedom, the mere circumstance of their *urgency*, however brought about, or however powerful, cannot change their nature and make them *necessary*.

With us, on account of our many imperfections,

* Philosophically considered, it is plain, that the *nature* of human actions, with respect to Liberty and Necessity, must be *perfectly* and *wholly* either of one kind or the other; as it is a *general characteristic* which we have then in view. But if, in an enquiry concerning these qualities, we refer *only* to the different degrees of *influence* the mind is under from the different natures of *objects*, (as represented above) our actions may be esteemed to be *more* or *less* free or necessary, according as this influence is *less* or *more* powerful. In a sense thus restricted, Freedom and Necessity may be said to admit of *degrees*; and in this light the subject is represented by the very ingenious author of *Letters on the Nature and Origin of Evil.* Though such an account is far from being *philosophically* just, the reader will see, that *practically* conceived (and which seems to be *all* intended by the author) it is not without a meaning, and that it manifests a *distinction* which he may find of some use in settling his notions on the subject under consideration.

this kind of Certainty will ever have in it some degree of *contingency*, and therefore it is, by most writers, properly denominated *moral*. But we may now proceed to observe, that with the Deity, who sees the minutest particular which can influence the Will in its determinations, this Certainty is no longer of a *moral* but of an *absolute* kind; and its *instant* intuitive glancings down the chain of motives and acts, may be imagined to coincide with the grounds of the other species of Certainty, just noticed, which arises from the supposition of an agent being a *second* time placed in the same circumstance.* But, let the reader adopt or reject this illustration as he likes, evident it is, that *from motive influence* THUS *viewed in us by the Deity*, his *Prescience* may be very clearly accounted for. And if the fact be so, and we are right in the above explanation of human agency, I presume farther, that (difficult as the problem is

* To distinguish this Certainty from that of *moral*, it might be called *identical*, on account of the *identity* of the process which produces it. And here it may be worth the room to note, that proper notions of these two kinds of Certainty may be of service in reading several places of the *Cor-*

generally held to be) these ideas will easily and satisfactorily reconcile God's Foreknowledge with man's Free Will.—But our subject only requires a slight mention of these things.

Having thus ascertained the nature of Human Freedom in a *direct* train of investigation, we will now proceed to the *collateral* arguments that may be adduced in its support, referred to in the last chapter but one; and which, with some other particulars that seem worthy of notice in this inquiry, will form the remaining part of the work.

respondence between the DRS. PRIESTLEY *and* PRICE; especially in the *Second Communication*, Part III. where it will appear, that what the latter author has said of Certainty in the *first* of these senses, his opponent answers with reference to the *second*. Indeed *one* intricate province of this dispute (which in several writers has occasioned a game at cross-purposes) may be unravelled merely by having a just and steady view of the distinctions now under notice.

CHAPTER 10.

HUMAN AGENCY *considered in the Abstract; and on the Probability that if the Deity be free, Man is free.*

THOUGH there are several reasons to believe that the sense, or feeling, of Free-agency, so prevalent in man, is perfectly right as to its reality, and its moral or serviceable purposes, yet many people's ideas of its nature may differ so much from the truth, that, when it is laid before them, they will be in *some parts* disappointed to find one thing, where they expected another. If analysis assist reason, it seldom enlightens common sense. Even definitions of ordinary matter have some particulars in them little looked for by those who are not used to speculation. And on this account it may be here of use to enquire, rather abstractedly, with what properties Free-

agency might be expected to appear, and subsist in the nature of things. For, in order to compare the type, we should not be ignorant of the anti-type.

A connexion of relation, or something like cause and effect, as has been observed before,* runs through all we know of nature, and nothing subsists *alone* correspondent to what *may* be conceived of it in the abstract. Thus, *matter* cannot be without *extension*, nor *extension* without *figure*; *motion* without *impulse*, nor *desire* without an *object*. Every thing has its yoke-fellow, or correlate; and *Liberty* itself (as it must be subject to some laws of movement, or pressed on, as it were, by some connected part) must necessarily be allied to some kind of restraint or observance.

Philosophic liberty may, in general, be conceived of two kinds; one which relates to what is living, or *active*, the other to what is dead, or *passive*. The liberty of *sufferance*, if we may so term it, is the humble attribute of *matter*; but it cannot be exercised unconditionally. If a body

* Proposition 1. Chap. 5.

be *free* to be removed into another place, that place must be unoccupied. If a stone be *free* to fall from the hand, there must be no impediment below it. If a block be *free* to have an image cut out of it, it must be penetrable to an instrument. This *passive* freedom, then, (which is all that belongs to the mere mechanical world) over and above the external agency, which is originally essential to its exercise, must have its conditions and its laws.

With regard to *living* agency, (which from its power of *thinking* is in common considered rather to be *Freedom* itself, than as the grounds of it in a process of reasoning) similar remarks may be made, and ought to be remembered. For, were we to consider, without reference to fact, in what shape it would appear, certainly we should conclude, not unaccompanied with some influencing connexion and principle of action. All *spontaneity*, from that of the lowest percipient to that of the highest rationality, must act upon something, and in some manner, or upon some account. Not to expect this is, as if we should expect the wind to blow, and yet in *no* direction. And in a being

like man, endowed with reason, what could be more likely to imagine would be the case, than that he would act rationally, and not at random? that is, from some *motive*, or for the attainment of some good, real or imaginary, rather than from caprice or blind heedlessness.

Tracing the matter, then, both on *the high priori road*, (as POPE phrases it) and through its humbler notions of experience, we perceive, that if there be, or *can* be such a thing as Human Freedom, it must be *combined* with some other thing, in a manner somehow like *relation of existence*, or of *cause and effect*.

And why not so combined? Why may not nature exhibit a *free* CONNEXION as well as a *necessary* one? This may be asked, and presumed to be the case, on the same grounds, we formerly argued concerning the existence of a *free* EFFECT* (which, indeed, implies a *free connexion*); it not being easy, on a slight glance, to discover *many* properties which take place in nature, any more than possible for the most perspicacious scrutiny

* Chap. 7.

to penetrate them *all*. We know (as was then observed) that there are two species of *Existence*, of very *opposite*, or *unlike* sorts, *caused* and *uncaused*. Of *Substance* also (according to the opinion of the generality of philosophers) there is a *material* and an *immaterial* one. *Quantity* is, likewise, of two opposite kinds, *positive* and *negative*; and *Space* and *Duration* have each the *unlike* qualities of *finite* and *infinite*. This considered, surely we are not to assume as a principle, or assert without proper inquiry and proof, that the *connexion* of natural things does not possess as singular a diversity; but rather infer, from the common opinion which is entertained of Human Liberty, that the Will governed by motives completes *another* instance of *counter species*, similar to those given above, in forming a *free Connexion*.

THOUGH there is often a deal of folly and presumption in pretending to scrutinize what so much transcends our narrow comprehension, as the attributes of the Divine Nature, yet if ever we may trust reasoning from analogy, we may certainly do

it in a comparison of the human understanding with that of the Divine. The only difference that we can conceive is in the *perfection*, and not in the *nature* of many of their most important faculties. The views of things and inducements to action must in him differ much in kind from what they are in us; but *some* views of things, and *some* inducements to action, he must doubtless have, and therefore all the exertions of his power must have some kind of unavoidable principles and laws. To his perception what *is*, *is*, and to his wisdom what *is fit*, *is fit*, as well as these things are to the most inferior rationality.

To attempt to prove the *philosophic Freedom* of the Deity, while we have doubts concerning *our* own, is preposterous. But if we suppose it a *perfection*, (as we certainly may) and that he is possessed of *all* perfection, we surely do right to ascribe it to him, though something gratuitously: And, then, as far as this is reasonable, and so far as it is believed, that our mental faculties agree in kind with his, so far is the last consideration a proof of the truth of the foregoing deductions in

behalf of Man's Free-agency: And more particularly we may note, (as the proper conclusion of this rather *circular* reasoning) that then the *motive-influence*, we talk so much of, is not incompatible with *free volition*.

CHAPTER 11.

Account of the different Sorts of NECESSITY, *as applied to Action,* and the Likelihood (on a cursory View of Things) that the Will possesses Properties of so singular a Kind, as to place it out of the Reach of all Necessary Influence.*

BESIDES the lax signification of the term *Necessity*, used to imply some kind of social or prudential *obligation*, it has other more restricted

* We only here take in *Necessity* as it relates to *Action*; were we to consider other kinds, we have these two remarkable ones.

1. The *Necessity by which the Deity exists*, which may be called *transcendent*. It implies an existence of such a kind, that the thing, or being, of which it is affirmed could never possibly have *not* existed. This we believe to be as *peculiar* as it is *transcendent*.

2. The *Necessity of inferred truth*; or *the Necessity of Relation*. This belongs to the demonstrative sciences.

meanings, of which it may be proper here to give some account.

1. There is a *Necessity*, or *Destiny*, talked of by some ancient philosophers,* which they supposed to be superior to the controul of both men and gods. This however the believer in Revelation cannot admit, and certainly it is (like many other of their tenets) only the coinage of imagination. But the notion in the abstract is very intelligible, and it may serve to stand at the head of all other kinds of Necessity, that relate to action.

2. Another sort of *Necessity*, (or rather *Fate*) respecting man, has been supposed by the ignorant and superstitious in all ages to lie in *the influence of the heavenly bodies*, and such like *magical energies*. On them Astrologers, and other Fortune-tellers, found their predictions. But influences of this kind, as is well known, are now totally exploded by the learned, and none granted to take place in nature, but those that are purely *physical*.

* This doctrine is said to have been first introduced by LEUCIPPUS and DEMOCRITUS.

3. A third species of *Necessity* (or *Fate*) that has respect to individual men, is said to exist in *divine decrees*. In the heathen world this was much talked of; and at present a similar opinion is held by some sects of Christians, and universally by the Mahometans, and called *Predestination*.

4. Granting this doctrine of *divine decrees* to be true, and that they are in some cases revealed to men, another sort of *Necessity* may be conceived, termed *hypothetical*.* This is the certainty that God will perform any promise that he is *supposed* thus to have made.

Of the *Necessity* of *revealed decrees* we may observe, that though they rest on the *veracity* and *unchangeableness* of the Deity, yet it is evident he has still the *power* to reverse them.

5. Another kind of *Necessity* is called *physical*; and relates to the certainty with which all mechanical causes produce their effects; or the certainty of the continuance of the laws of nature. The experience of ages has proved their general stabi-

[* It will occur to the reader, that in this *certainty*, we have the highest instance we can imagine of the *moral* kind mentioned in Chap. 9.]

lity, yet they are, of course, liable to the controul of their Divine Author; and the history of miracles affords proof of their occasional suspension.

Whether in their actions men be or be not entangled with magical influences and verbal decrees, evident it is, that they are much governed *by*, and connected *with*, a variety of circumstances arising *necessarily* from the laws of nature, and to which therefore, as placed *necessarily* in their way, they must *necessarily* conform. To an interference of *this* kind with the actions of men, (as has been already observed *) the term *Fate* was generally applied by the ancient poets and philosophers; yet while they were fully sensible of an universal Providence, and the unavoidable concatenation of cause and effect in material things, &c. they conceived the Will to be possessed of native *Freedom*, founded on the *self-moving*, or efficient power of the *mind*. And thus it was, that, just

* In the beginning of the preface. And for a fuller account of all which the reader is referred to *Jackson's Defence of Human Liberty*; a *learned* work, written principally in answer to *Trenchard*'s erroneous notions on this subject, given in *Cato's Letters*.

as they placed their thoughts on *the one* or *the other* of these conceptions, they said the actions of men were *fated*, or *free*.

Now, respecting the different species of *Necessity* above enumerated, we have already observed that the opposers of Freedom make it of the last mentioned sort, and pretend to prove, that the movements of the mind are virtually like those of common matter. In reply, we have endeavoured to shew this notion to be erroneous, and that, when rightly examined, the two cases differ from each other very essentially. But might we not here, independent of stricter reasoning, from merely considering with PLATO* the *self-moving* power of the Soul as of a more *divine* nature than that of *external force*, conclude it to be endowed with much *higher* attributes than belong to matter?

[* Vide what *Balbus* says in *Cicero, De Nat. Deo. Lib.* 2. "Audiamus Platonem quasi quendam Deum Philosophorum; cui duos placet esse Motus, unum, suum; alterum, externum: esse autem *divinius* quod ipsum *ex se suâ sponte* moveatur, quam quod *pulsu agitetur alieno*. Hunc autem motum in solis animis esse ponit, ab hisque principium motus esse ductum putat."]

The powers of the five links, which compose this chain, *sensation*, *ideas*, *desire*, *volition*, and *action*, it has been noticed have a SELFNESS (if it may be so called) arising from *Vitality*, which places them in our conceptions of *excellence* far above any material powers. And do not the two last links (*volition*, and *action*) possess a superadded *activity*,* (evident to the most slight and ordinary observation) which exhibits a *singularity* in the phenomena of nature, sufficient to make them the grounds of mental qualities equally singular, and, in short, to be the *golden* links of man's Free-agency?

As in the last chapter we have shewn, that Human Liberty, from its nature, must be placed pretty *near* the confines of Necessity, so, from what is intimated in this, it does not seem unlikely that the properties of the Will are so far *above* those of matter and mechanism, as probably to advance it into the limits of Freedom.

What is the truth, indeed, arguments of the present kind cannot determine. But it may be

* Vide Prop. II. Chap. 6.

mentioned, by the bye, that on such cursory ideas as these must be founded whatever is said on the subject by writers who confine their observations to the compass of a page, or a sentence; and, likewise, all that is conceived of it by *common apprehension*, in those judgments it sometimes as *happily* as *hastily* forms on some of the most important matters of life. It is true, such teachers and such judges may be *wrong* in their opinions; but it is not unwise to consider, also, that they may be *right*.

As we have here talked of the *comparative* excellencies of the *self-powers* of matter and mind, and termed *volition* and *action*, GOLDEN links in the mental chain,—to continue the figure, we might call those of *sensation*, *ideas*, and *desire*, on which they depend, SILVER, and that of the *object* from which they all first came, BRASS; while the *absolute*, *black*, *abstract*, *Necessity*, mentioned at the head of the chapter, might be denominated, IRON.

CHAPTER 12.

A more particular Examination into the Nature and Characteristic Marks of Liberty and Necessity.

IMAGINING that what is *commonly* understood of the Nature of Liberty and Necessity, as it relates to action, to be sufficient for the purpose of this essay, we have not, in the occasional observations on it which precede, examined with much nicety into the characteristic properties of these two qualities. But, as it is our desire to place the subject in every point of view which seems favourable to the discovery of truth, and as some readers may be benefited by its perusal, we introduce this chapter as a proper sequel to what has been before delivered on the subject.

It may be remarked here, (as a kind of *lemma*) previous to this inquiry, that in whatever the

Liberty or Necessity of Human Action consists, either the one or the other quality *must* characterize it; and that, therefore, to prove that the one *does not* take place, is the same as to prove that the other *does*. Of this we seem to have the same evident intuition which we have, that a line must be either crooked or straight; a proposition either true or false; and a limb either at rest or in motion. In each particular thus instanced, we perceive clearly it only admits of the specified alternatives, without the possibility of possessing a medium which is *neither* the one nor the other.*

Now the idea of Necessity of action was undoubtedly first gained from observing the nature of *material* action, or the movements of a piece of mechanism; and let us endeavour to see in what particular circumstance that Necessity is properly placed.

Suppose a wheel actuated by a certain pinion, which is a part of a piece of machinery. This motion of the wheel is allowed by all to be necessary;

* To what Locke has unaccountably intimated contrary to this, we have made reply in a note, Chap. 5.

and we have now to enquire in what particular, or circumstance, its Necessity consists.

Some have supposed, that we ought to attribute it to the *pinion* which moved it, or to the *Connexion* it has with the pinion, and its train of secondary causes; since it is evident at first glance, that the pinion governs the wheel, and inevitably impels it *one way*, while itself turns (and is turned) *another*. But plausible as this notion may appear, when inattentively viewed, I fancy it is wrong. Let us imagine the wheel to be so formed that it could, somehow, of its own accord, occasionally avoid being moved by the pinion, and that we were well acquainted with wheels of this species,—should we then say that there was a Necessity of action contained in the *Connexion?* As, therefore, in the first instance, Necessity *took place*, and in the other *not*, though the connexion still remained, it is plain, *something else* was the genuine ground of the Necessity in question. It is plain, in short, as appears on due examination, that the Necessity of the motion of the wheel must properly lie *within* the wheel itself, or in its own *inherent Qualities*, and that it arises from its *inertness*, or from

its *not* being endowed with any power or property which could prevent such a movement of itself taking place, when the pinion turned upon its axis. —Or, what we mean may be expressed otherwise thus: Because the wheel is possessed of such limited Inherent powers, that it *cannot* but move this way, if the pinion move that way, we say that its motion is Necessary. For, Necessity of motion is a *Quality** of what is moved, and Qualities lie evidently *within* the things themselves, and not in any thing *ab extra.* The *outward* circumstance of *Connexion,* therefore, is not the *Cause* of the Necessity in question, but more properly its *Concomitant:* a concomitant, indeed, which is requisite to *bring forth* the powers or qualities of the wheel, but which is no way subservient to their *Existence in the wheel.*

* As Necessity is the *negation* of Freedom, we must here let the word *quality* have a *negative* sense; understanding *the quality of Necessity of motion* to imply *its want of the quality of Freedom,* in the same manner as we might say *negatively* of a *ruler,* that its quality is to want crookedness, instead of saying *positively* that its quality is to be straight, &c.— This note is not so much introduced for the sake of *information,* as to prevent *cavil.*

To make the matter still plainer, let us introduce a supposition used once before,* just now alluded to, and very possible in the nature of things. Let us imagine the wheel no longer *inert*, but a *living* wheel, and thence enabled to shift its centre, and join itself to any other of a number of pinions that stood near it in the machinery. Here we should see, under an *identical* sort of Connexion, a *totally different* Quality displayed. And in this case, therefore, the motion would be of a kind which (from what we have remarked above) is intitled to the epithet *Free*. *Free* it appears, indeed, on the face of its description, and *Free* it must also be from being *opposite* to, or not coming under the idea of a motion that is *Necessary*.

Mere *Connexion*, therefore, is evidently not the *Characteristic* of Necessity. And it will be granted, I do not doubt, that had it been as common for us to see wheels of the last described sort, as of the other, Necessary motion would never have been sought for in *Connexion*, but where we have sought for it, in the *inherent Qualities* or *powers* of the wheels themselves.

* Chap. 7.

All this seems very evident. Things may undoubtedly possess the most *opposite* essential qualities, and yet shew themselves by the assistance of a *similar* Connexion. There may be in fact (as we have before surmised, somewhat speculatively*) both Free and Necessary Connexions. And should the mere circumstance of *opposition of nature* in these attributes, or powers, create any distrust of the truth of our representation, several instances may be soon recollected of the kind which can occasion no doubt, and of which this is one. If we give a stroke to a living animal, we shall cause in it both *sensations* and *ideas*. But if we strike a piece of timber there will none arise. In which examples it is easy to perceive, that *ideas*, and *no ideas*, *sensations*, and *no sensations*, proceed from *opposite* Inherent Qualities, and yet the Cause or Connexion is the *very same*,†

* Chap. 10.

† Or consider this example. Two strokes may be made with a pen, the one *straight*, the other *crooked*, which, though of diametrically *opposite* characteristic qualities, proceed from an exactly *similar* action, or, in other words, are both appended to the *very same* species of Connexion.

From this it appears, that were we to characterize or define the Freedom and Necessity of Action here ascribed to the *living* and *dead* wheels, in the most *practical* manner, we might say in the first case, that it consists in an inherent *active* power, or quality, of the wheel, which makes it impossible for a person, previous to the trial, to point out with infallible certainty, what pinion it would be moved by on the trial; and, in the second case, that it consists in such an inherent *passive* power, or quality, as does make it possible and easy for us, before the trial, to predict infallibly the pinion that would be actuating on the trial.

The sum of this considered, and that what has been here said of the living wheel and its pinions, may, by an easy translation of ideas, be applied to the Will and its motives, we see, in a manner rather different from any we have used before to shew it, that the *Criterions* of *Connexion* for Necessity, and of *no Connexion* for Freedom, are palpably false and sophistical; that man is a free agent if we can either trust our simple conceptions of Freedom, or, if what is *opposite* to Necessity

be Freedom; and, in short, that *Matter*, or whatever is *Dead*, (and therefore *Passive*) is essentially Necessary; and *Mind*, or whatever is *Living*, (and therefore *Active*) is essentially Free.

The learned Necessitarian so often mentioned in these pages, speaking of the characteristic marks which he produces of the Necessity in question, i. e. *Motive-influence*,* or *Connexion*, and the *certainty of a definite event taking place in definite circumstances*, says, or intimates, somewhere, that if we but allow him these facts, he is indifferent by what specific name we call the resulting action, as they establish a genuine Necessity of the Will. *Names*, as he observes himself, are only *words*, and it is surely to contend for all to contend for *things*. But, if we be right in what is already opposed to these principles, he must, in this enquiry, be obliged not only to give up the *name* of Necessity, but likewise the *thing*. For we fancy we have undeniably shewn, that, in every mode of just consideration, the Will in its Volitions manifests an attribute, or power, the very *Reverse* of

* Which includes, it will be recollected, the argument from *Cause and Effect*.

what is deemed Necessary. A power that contains every *conceivable* mark of *substantial* Freedom. A power grounded on a most *conspicuous* principle of the mind; which is plainly of the highest consequence in the province of morals, and which, therefore, deserves our best endeavours (however tedious they prove) to rescue it from the labyrinths of sophistry and perversion.

CHAPTER 13.

The NATURE *of the Influence of Motives farther considered and illustrated.*

IN order to render the ideas of Human Liberty and Necessity still more satisfactory and complete, it is hoped the following familiar examples may be of use.

Suppose a being, like man in every other respect, so formed, that the seeing of fine houses and cities were the business of his life, and that his *visual* tour, were conducted in this manner. As soon as ever he was gratified with the sight of any one place, and, from his own experience, or common report, had formed an idea that the preference, in point of *shew*, was due to some other, that immediately his whole faculties became dormant, and he was in that state snatched up and conveyed to the place by some invisible power,

and there, on the revival of his faculties, left to view its exteriors, till he was fully satisfied, and had formed another *idea of preference* to be immediately followed by a like journey of passive dormancy; and that, in consequence of this agency, he conceived it as the nature of his being to have these fits of stationary perception, and unaccountable removal.

Again. Suppose this person released from his supernatural assistance and impressions, and that he were to begin his tour in the same place, and, when reflecting on his removal to another, have the same ideas of preference in the same order that he had before; and, also, that these ideas of preference (in him *now* motives) were followed with volitions to visit these places, and that he visited them accordingly.

Now, on comparing these two examples, it is evident, that the *sole* object of the tourist, that is, the gratification of his taste for fine buildings, would be attained, in both cases, exactly alike, though by very different means. In the first case (as the mind virtually wants the faculty of the Will, and there is *nothing* concerned but what is in its

nature *passive*) we might *truly* say his journies were *necessary*. But in the other (where the *active* power of the Will has place) there is surely a *difference*, nay, an *opposition* of circumstances, that, on the first blush, should free the excursions from every idea of the kind.

This instance is intended to shew, in a popular way, that the term *necessary*, when applied to human actions, is violent and improper; and the following one is designed to illustrate, how probably the influence of Motives may be compatible with Free-agency.

We have already taken an *inward* view, as we may call it, of Human Action, in our examination of the procedure of the mind; let us now see how it appears *outwardly*, as it were, in its real effects in life.

A servant of good common sense is engaged, we will suppose, to be frequently about the person of his master, in the capacity of footman, and the business of one day goes on thus.—In the morning the master rings the bell, and enquires after the weather. His servant informs him, it is fine and fair. Then, says he, I'll go a shooting to-

day; for I find exercise does me good. When in the fields he recollects, that a certain person will call on him at ten, on business, and says, though there is plenty of game, he will go home, as he does not like to disappoint any one. When at dinner, he refuses to taste of a dish strongly recommended to him, because he has already eat heartily, and he thinks it unhealthy to overcharge the functions of nature. After dinner he calls for pen and ink, and tells his footman he will write a card of invitation to a certain neighbour to come and dine with him the day after to-morrow, as that is the only day he can soon be at home. This done, he orders his servant to bring a particular book into the parlour, as there are a few pages in it, he observes, he could wish to look at again before it is returned to the circulating library. After this he calls for his footman to get horses ready, for, as he finds himself a little flat with reading, he says, he will take a ride out to refresh himself before supper. On the way he meets a beggar, and gives him a shilling, because, he remarks, he is very like his old uncle. After supper he orders his man to call the chamber-maid to air the bed,

and intimates to him, that, as they have no company that evening, he will retire early to recover the sleep he has lost for a few preceding nights. —And thus the day is closed.

Now, in these transactions, the footman always heard his master mention the *motives*, and reasons, which induced him to do all he did, and he knew that every thing was done in consequence of these motives; he also was satisfied, from numberless external signs, that his master possessed a self-active power, and that he might do, or not do, whatever he pleased. Yet, instead of inferring from this, that he was a *necessary* agent, strictly tied down to a line of conduct, in consequence of these motives, he would fancy the union of them and his free-will, the most natural thing imaginable, and the person a novice in human nature, who should pretend to tell him the contrary.

Thus the matter would appear to the servant. It never would occur to him, that his master, in his actions, might be considered as a *slave* to the mandates of *another*; but, rather, that he was a *despotic monarch*, who, in every transaction, was *willing* to be counselled by *another*, of whose

superior wisdom he was so highly satisfied, and whose person he so well loved, that he could never refuse to follow his advice.

IT is judged, that the reader versed in philosophical inquiries will perceive at once (without entering farther into particulars) that according to the true meaning of *words*, and a just idea of *things*, the four foregoing propositions fully prove the Liberty of Human Action. However, (as intimated before) for the sake of such as may be less acquainted with subjects of this kind, this and the three last chapters have been added, in hopes they would enable them more clearly to understand the general nature of Liberty and Necessity, and where the merits of the question lie. The author, therefore, would now flatter himself, that *no* competent and unbiased peruser can fail to *see*, as well as *feel*, the erroneousness of the opinion here opposed; that its principles are founded upon a *partial* and *incomplete* view of the subject; that the *criterions*, or *characteristics* of the debated points, laid down by its supporters, are still either *equivocal* or *false*, and that, in short, a just in-

vestigation and display of the question, militates with such force against the Necessity of the Will, that to teach the doctrine is equally to *pervert* language, and *misuse* philosophy.

CHAPTER 14.

That the Freedom of Human Agency is strongly supported by COMMON SENSE.

THE conviction that every one feels in his own mind of the freedom of his actions, has still been appealed to in this enquiry as a satisfactory proof of its existence. And whether this conviction arise from the mere suggestions of instinct, or, rather, from the intuitive shootings, which the mind often directly makes to the most just conclusions, through the most intricate labyrinths of refinement, it certainly must have great weight with every rational enquirer. For, if this be a state of discipline and probation, from which, in consequence of our *actions*, and the verdicts of our *consciences*, we must, after death, emerge into another, either of happiness or misery; then, surely, it is in the highest degree reasonable to pre-

sume, that the Divine Author of our being would neither impose upon us with *false* notions, nor leave us in the *dark* concerning what appears so essential to our salvation, as, whether we are FREE, or NECESSARY *agents*. If there be any particular belonging to man, of which we might especially expect to have just ideas somehow given us by our Creator, it must be *that*, which is the subject of this inquiry; because, without them, what is called *Morality* and *Religion*, seem worse than delusion and mockery.

But, though Common Sense thus briefly concludes man to be free, it easily penetrates a good way into the nature and principles of Human-agency; and its conceptions are perfectly agreeable to the above theory. Though, on the one hand, mankind at large are satisfied, that their powers of volition and action are free powers, yet on the other, there is nothing more familiar to them than the influence of motives. It is perpetually in their thoughts, and on their tongues; and if you argue with them, they will go so far as to grant every thing concerning them a *Necessitarian* would assert, but his unpalatable inference. They will

allow, that nothing, however trifling, is done without a motive, and that motives are not of their own making. And yet they will insist, that it is one of the easiest things to conceive, that their actions are still free, and that in any *given* instance of action, it might have been numberless different ways. But here they stop. And, though metaphysical reasonings and distinctions might confound and puzzle them, they cannot be induced to change their opinion. With them such an argument as the following, would seem demonstration, in favour of Human Liberty; and, indeed, simple as it is, when rightly understood, it perhaps contains *truth*, which should not be without its sway in the minds of the most learned.

A person, we will imagine, has gone out of his parlour, through a certain door, a thousand times without exception; and, while the house continues in its present form, there is no doubt but he will always quit the room by the same opening. But, is this an act of real *necessity?* could not he at any time have had an opening made in any part of its sides to have gone through? Surely he might. The *motive* of convenience, then, that led him to

this uniformity of path was not strictly *constraining*, but *inviting*; and, hence, though *certainly* prevailing, might as certainly have been set aside.

To a philosopher who keeps his thoughts solely fixed on the influence of motives, and thinks no cause can properly have a *free* effect, this reasoning will seem impertinent. To one who rightly takes the singular properties of our *active* power of volition into the account, it will again appear to the purpose. But it is not needful in this place to insist farther on the argument of Common Sense. It is sufficient to have recalled it to the reader's mind, and stated its pretensions.*—And

* The great weight the decisions of Common Sense have in this controversy, is shewn very copiously and forcibly in Dr. Beattie's *Essay on Truth, Part* II. *Chap.* II. *Sect.* 3.

In a series of well-written letters, called the *Necessitarian*, published since these pages were drawn up, it is *one* of the chief designs of the author to overthrow the argument for Free Will, brought by its advocates, from the universal consciousness, or feeling we have of it. This he attempts to do by endeavouring to prove, that we *experience* no such consciousness, but that, in reality, we experience the *contrary*, or a *Necessity of Will*.—To his reasoning, I apprehend, the following objections may be justly opposed. 1. That what

from its authority, (for it certainly has *great* authority) we will now proceed to notice that of the Scriptures.

is advanced on this head, is inconclusive, from the *manner* of its being urged; for it endeavours to shew what we *ought* to feel, rather than what we *do* feel, by giving a philosophical account of the nature of volition, or the *fact*, instead of shewing how it is conceived by mankind in general, or stands with them as an *opinion*. 2. The case seems to be misstated: For the *feeling* in question (if rightly explained) is not, as is alledged, that when we are doing an action in consequence of a *prevailing* motive, we are at the same time conscious, or have a feeling, of *another prevailing* motive to let it alone; but, that when we do an act, we are conscious we *could*, by means of some motive or other, come to a determination to let it alone, 3. The author, in his reasoning, goes upon *wrong principles*; as the Freedom he argues against is one that in its determinations has *no* reference to motives; a mere chimera, (as we have observed before) which, however countenanced by some writers in behalf of Liberty, has been recently denied (after CLARKE) by the best, [PRICE, PALMER, HORSLEY,] and is too palpably wrong and injurious not to manifest some want of candour in the *Necessitarians*, who *now* introduce it into the dispute, as a first and favourite tenet of their adversaries.

CHAPTER 15.

That the SCRIPTURES *presuppose the Freedom of Human Action.*

WE can scarce open a page in these sacred volumes, in which man is not directly, or by implication, considered as a free agent. Their exhortations to good works, and rebukes for evil ones, on the grounds of praise and blame, punishment and reward, are, indeed, numerous: as, also, are their calls to repentance and amendment of life. Throughout the whole of them, it appears, that God has set before us *life and death, good and evil, blessing and cursing*. And *the influence of motives* is recognized in every history, and supposed in every promise. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel?** is [as Dr. PRIESTLEY remarks!] the con-

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

stant voice of their admonitions: And, *If thou doest well, shall not thou be accepted? And, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door,** is the general burthen of their sanctions. God is every where represented as a *moral* governor, and men as *moral* agents. And (according to the language of St. PAUL) our Divine Author is One, *Who will render unto every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God.*†

It is true, there are several passages in scripture which represent God as the author of all we *do*; and not only the sovereign disposer of every good and perfect gift, (whether it be as to disposition here, or happiness hereafter) but also sometimes, as the cause of the hardness of our hearts,

* Gen. iv. 7. † Rom. ii. 6. &c.

and our propensities to evil. The texts of this kind Dr. PRIESTLEY produces with the evident spirit of *Calvinism*, and he would persuade us they confirm the doctrine of *Necessity*.* Were they not capable of other explanations than those he has given, something might be said from them, which no advocate for Human Liberty would like to hear. But they have often been shewn, as Mr. PALMER reminds him,† to admit of a sense perfectly consistent with the ideas of Man's Free-agency; a sense, indeed, most obvious, and which is founded on the mode of speech, which says, God *does*, what he *foresees* will be done, or *prompts* or *enables* men to do. 'Tis the language of piety, and not the language of predestination.

But whatever words were to lay open, in an adequate manner, *the ways of God with man*, they must be expected to contain particulars that would be *mysterious* and *intricate* to us. And till we have settled among ourselves the number of diffi-

* *Philo. Necess. Sect.* XI.

† *Observations in Defence of the Liberty of Man, Sect.* XI.

culties which attend the first articles of religious belief, it does not seem to become us to presume too pertinaciously, and for no pleasing purposes, to teach any thing which appears to militate against *plain sense* in *harmony* with the evident and palpable meaning of *Holy Writ*.

With this remark I quit the subject, and leave it to the judgment of the reader, whether it does not appear both from Scripture and Common Sense, that (though we should *never* be able satisfactorily to unfold it) there is a provision in nature to reconcile the Influence of Motives with the Free-agency of man.

CHAPTER 16.

Short Miscellanious Arguments belonging to the Subject.

THERE are a few detached arguments used in this controversy on both sides of the question, which it may be proper to lay before the reader, as follow.

The first we shall state, is against the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, and is this: Is it not consonant to reason, to think, that, in proportion to the clearness with which the process of this Necessity is *seen*, and the firmness with which its principles are *believed*, *motives* will lose their actuating efficacy? And, hence, if our minds were much enlightened and enlarged beyond what they are, (as we hope they will be in a happy hereafter, and is at present the case of superior beings) that this accession of knowledge might leave us in a

mere torpid state of sensation. Since, therefore, a degree of intelligence may be supposed which is incompatible with activity, do not the principles of Philosophical Necessity destroy themselves?*

Another argument on the same side may be this.—It is intimated by the great advocate for Necessity, so often named, that its reception as a tenet would draw after it a thousand other changes in opinion.† I presume he alludes to opinions *moral* and *religious*, and then the remark is certainly right. But, does not this circumstance, properly considered, form an argument against the tenet? Though, after all our discoveries, *natural knowledge* may be justly supposed still in its infancy, yet the *essential principles of religion and morals* have been examined long enough, under favourable circumstances, by unfettered and enlightened minds, to convince us, that they are already rightly

* See this argument handled at large, with much ingenuity, in a small tract entitled *Philosophical Necessity briefly Invalidated.* [*Richardson and Urquhart*, 1781.]

† I. Let. to Mr. PALMER, p. 93.

understood and explained.* And therefore, as they militate against the doctrine in question, we cannot but infer, that most probably it is wrong.

Some minds, however, because we are ignorant of many things, and have been grossly deceived in others, are inclined to think, that whatever is *commonly* believed is still to be doubted, and, that because new improvements are daily making in *arts* and *sciences*, a like advancement of *religious* and *moral* knowledge ought reasonably to be expected; and not only so, but that the illuminations of the latter will be, in some sort, a consequence of the former. The author just alluded to seems to possess these notions in a high degree, and to think that the *English hierarchy* has some reason to tremble at an *air pump*, or an *electrical machine*.† In a *sanguineness* of this kind, perhaps

* See *Ser.* xiii. Vol. I. of the SERMONS by the excellent Bishop HURD.

† "I shall pass for an enthusiast with some, but I am perfectly easy under the imputation, because I am happy in those views which subject me to it; but, considering the amazing improvements in natural knowledge which have been made within the last century, and the many ages,

mistaken notions concerning the above-named particulars may be as soon expected to take place, as

abounding with men who had no other object but study, in which, however, nothing of this kind was done, there appears to me to be a very particular providence in the concurrence of those circumstances which have produced so great a change; and I cannot help flattering myself, that this will be instrumental in bringing about other changes in the state of the world, of much more consequence to the improvement and happiness of it.

"This rapid progress in knowledge, which, like the progress of a wave of the sea, of sound, or of light from the sun, extends itself not this way or that way only, but *in all directions*, will, I doubt not, be the means, under God, of extirpating *all* error and prejudice, and of putting an end to all undue and usurped authority in the business of *religion*, as well as of *science*; and all the efforts of the interested friends of corrupt establishments of all kinds will be ineffectual for their support in this enlightened age; though by retarding their downfal, they may make the final ruin of them more complete and glorious. It was ill policy of Leo the Tenth to patronize polite literature. He was cherishing an enemy in disguise. And the English hierarchy (if there be any thing unsound in its constitution) has equal reason to tremble even at an air pump, or an electrical machine."

Preface to I. *Vol. of Experiments on Air.*

in an equal share of *bigotry*. The wisest of men have thought that *philosophy* is not to *rectify*, but to *hearken* to the doctrines of Revelation.* And he whose belief is to be regulated by metaphysical

* On this head take the opinion of *one* man celebrated for wisdom, as quoted in the discourses of a late learned divine.

"A fruitless desire to understand mysteries, that is, to understand the whole of what God has revealed in part only, is sure to turn the mind from real knowledge to metaphysical jargon. The great leader of all our modern discoveries, the sagacious and comprehensive Lord BACON, formed no expectations in the behalf of religion, or philosophy, of any improvements to be made in either, by the assistance of the other: On the contrary, he foresaw the mischiefs they would mutually receive from an improper alliance. When he is taking a review of all the parts of learning, and observing the defects of each, he has a remarkable passage, which I wish to leave impressed on your minds. "In this part of know-"ledge," says he, "touching divine philosophy, I am so far "from noting any deficience, as I rather note an excess: "whereunto I have digressed, because of the extreme pre-"judice which both religion and philosophy have received, "and may receive, by being commixed together; as that "which will undoubtedly make an heritical religion, and "an imaginary and fabulous philosophy."

Dr. POWELL's *Discourses, p.* 350.

deductions, or mechanical experiments, will in many things be found only moulding a nose of wax by the fire.—This, however, is rather digressive.

The auxiliary proof sometimes used for Liberty, which says, because we have an idea of Free Will, therefore it is probable we are possessed of it, does not appear conclusive. We have ideas of the most demonstrable absurdities. But I fancy it may be observed, as an argument of some weight, that were men to be free, in the highest conception of the term, we could expect no other manifestations of it, than those which we now experience.

An argument of an indirect kind in behalf of Philosophical Necessity is sometimes built upon the *certainty of the Divine prescience*, supposing that what is foreseen, must, merely on that account, be *predetermined*, or *necessary*. But this is a sort of begging the question. Before this inference can be drawn from the premises, we should be satisfied that it is not possible to foresee what is *free*, as well as what is *necessary*. One would think, however, that the slightest glance into the nature of things would shew, that *Divine*

prescience has no more influence on human actions than *Divine immutability*, and that a free concatenation of events, is as conceivable as a necessary one. However, if the objection should be thought of consequence, a demonstrable refutation of it may be found in CLARKE's *Discourses on the Attributes*.*

As a part of a preconceived system of metaphysics and theology, the author above mentioned has, in the *first volume of his Disquisitions*, attempted to prove, that *matter fitly organized may think*, and that the whole of man is nothing but matter. And as an argument in behalf of Philosophical Necessity, he makes it to be a direct inference from this hypothesis; "for," he says, "mechanism is "the immediate consequence of materialism."† Although at first sight this appears an obvious and satisfactory deduction, I cannot but demur to its cogency. Though it is plain, matter must act *ne-*

* *Prop.* x. *p.* 95. *6th Ed.* Or, for a more particular refutation, and the opinion of the ancients on this head, see *Jackson's Def. of Hum. Lib.*

† *Disquisitions, Vol.* I. *p.* 356, and *Preface to Treat. on Necess. p.* xx.

cessarily upon matter, yet it must be considered, that here *thought* is concerned in the business, a thing very different from matter, though matter may be the occasion of it. Therefore, what is conceived of the nature of *matter* acting on *matter*, may not be true of the nature of *thought* influencing *matter*, or *matter* influencing *thought*, and on the validity of which inference the point in question must rest.

Besides, if there be such a thing as a *free effect* in the procedure of the mind, as we have attempted to prove, this fact, I apprehend, will at once set aside all hope of support to the Necessitarian tenet, from the doctrine of *Materialism*.

The subject, however, leads to endless intricacies; and as there does not seem to be any *immediate* want of the discussion, enough has been said concerning it for the present purpose. Therefore, without more words, it is submitted to the judgment of the reader, if it do not appear, in conformity to the opinion of Dr. CLARKE,* that the question respecting Liberty and Necessity, is

* *Discourses on the Attributes, p.* 90.

still *the same*, whether the powers of perception and thought arise merely from *the organization of matter*, or they are the effects of *its union with a spiritual substance*.

CHAPTER 17.

The Subject continued.

AS a collateral argument of the first consequence, to shew that the Will is necessary, it is alledged, that it affords an easy solution of the *manner* in which the Deity foresees events; because, it is urged, to his infinite intellectual perfections, it will be easy to trace down and behold every thing as it subsists in a chain of necessary causes. If he do not controul self-determinations, says Dr. PRIESTLEY, he cannot foresee them.

Were we sure that this is the only way of accounting for the Divine prescience, (which is far from the case *) we have said enough in these pages

* There are several ways in which we may form an imperfect notion how the Deity may foresee events; concerning which, see *Notes on the English Ed. of King's Origin of Evil, p. 66, and 392.*

to shew, that it equally belongs to the doctrine of Free Will, by shewing, that where there is no *necessity*, there is a *certainty* in its events, which affords exactly the same medium. The doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, therefore, receives no accession of evidence from this consideration.

The argument, however, it may be farther observed, includes a supposition, which perhaps proves too much for the cause of Necessity. For, it proceeds upon an idea, that there subsists an exact analogy between the nature of the Divine and human mind; and, hence, that as we mostly can *in part* foresee what *another* will do, from attending circumstances, the Deity will always from them *perfectly* foresee it. But, if we trust to this analogical reasoning, in our *ascent* from the human to the Divine mind, and likewise believe that the Deity is a Free-agent, (which some Necessitarians have not *yet* denied) it will follow, from as rational a *descent*, pretty forcibly, that man is also a Free-agent.*

* *See Philos. Necess. briefly Invalidated,* abovenamed. [And the close of Chap. 10.]

How the *full belief* of the tenet of Necessity would affect the moral conduct of the *generality* of mankind, (though we might guess perhaps pretty well) as it has not *hitherto* been tried, we cannot certainly say. But as different dispositions would doubtless consider it *differently*, there is much reason to fear, that *with several* it would not be to its advantage. From the belief of Free Will no *diversity* of sentiments, as to moral responsibility, can arise. Hence might be deduced another argument against the tenet in question, of no inconsiderable weight.

Though little stress is intended to be laid in this essay on *personal* authority, yet it is probable there are readers who (if it do not afford them information) would like somewhere to see briefly laid down, what were the opinions of the *ancient philosophers* on the subject in debate. To the sentiments of *untutored* sense given in a former chapter,* it must be satisfactory to see added those of *early* science. And this may be clearly and concisely done by quoting the recapitulatory paragraph

* Chap. 14.

of *Jackson's Defence of Human Liberty*, already noticed; drawn up in a good measure to lay open these opinions, and to which the reader is referred for what farther information on the subject he may be desirous to obtain.

"Thus I think it is clearly and indisputably proved, that the *Freedom of Human Actions* was the general and prevailing, and almost unanimous doctrine, not only of the *ancient Christians*, (amongst whom it was universally, and without any controversy received and maintained) but also of the most eminent and numerous sects of philosophers, both *Jewish* and *Heathen*: Particularly that it was the doctrine of the two principal sects amongst the *Jews*, the *Sadducees*, and *Pharisees*, and not improbably of the little fraternity of the *Essenes* also; and that it was taught by the five great sects among the Heathens, which comprehended all the philosophy of *Greece* and *Rome*, namely, the *Epicureans*, *Stoics*, *Platonics*, *Aristotelians*, and *Academics*; and that the opposers of this doctrine were chiefly *Leucippus*, *Empedocles*, and *Democritus*, the first founders of the *Epicurean* sect, but opposed herein by *Epicurus*,

and his followers; *Heraclitus*, *Diodorus*, and some *astrologers* and *fortune-tellers* amongst the Stoics, who were greatly despised and condemned by the most learned of that sect also. And I have also shewn distinctly, and at large, that the ancient *Platonic* and *Stoical* notion of *Fate* and *Necessity* agreed with each other, and was declared to be consistent with the *Liberty* of men's actions; and was not understood to be a *necessary efficient Cause* of human actions at all, but only to be the determinate *Will* and *Decrees* of God, or the *Laws* of his *Providence*, by which the universe was governed, and good and evil was dispensed unto men, according to the *free* and *voluntary* actions and conduct of their lives."

In conclusion of these remarks I shall just observe, that if (as the Necessitarians urge as a leading principle of their doctrine) nothing can be *free*, that is not *independent* of all *influence* and *connexion*, then it is evident the Deity cannot be *free*, as his actions are doubtless under the *influence* of motives, and somehow *connected* with something that *precedes*. This, indeed, these sectaries have of late not scrupled to grant. The inference is an

unpleasing one, to say no worse of it. But is there not danger of its being made more so, by carrying the deduction a step farther? The Deity, we allow, exists *necessarily*, and if he do not possess Freedom, (to separate his actions, as it were, from the ground of his being) must we not conclude, that every thing we know, or can conceive; all existence, and every occurrence respecting both time and eternity, is grounded upon Necessity in one form or other? NECESSITY thus becomes ALL IN ALL; and how we *honour* God in the conception, is not easy to make out. Surely, then, these inferences, in so very *mysterious* a province of inquiry, should, at once, strike the principles which produce them from every modest and well-informed mind; and if *imagination's guilt* (as the poet calls it) *may* enter into our speculations, where can it be more clearly seen, than in fabricating systems of theology, of which these principles make a part?

CHAPTER 18.

A few COMPARATIVE *Remarks on Predestination, Philosophical Necessity, and the foregoing Idea of Freedom; and on their Connexion with Morals.*

TO the term *Predestination* several ideas are affixed by the different sects who profess to believe in it; but they all, I think, agree in this tenet, that, with regard to certain persons, liable among the rest of mankind to the curse of original sin, God has (in some mode or other, and for his own good pleasure) predestined or decreed, they shall be eternally happy in a future state; and, hence, that sooner than the work of regeneration should fail of taking place in the minds of these *elect*, all the established laws of nature would be violated. On this account the predestinarian holds himself to be perfectly passive; utterly *dead in sin*,

and that any endeavour of his own to procure final salvation is vain and ineffectual.

The doctrine of *Philosophical Necessity* seems to be this, that, through the influence of motives, which are *not* at our own disposal, and which acting upon us (according to their nature) as necessarily as gravity moves matter, the Deity makes men *be* and *do* what he expressly designs and appoints; that we are as *instruments* in his hands to bring about intended events, and that our whole freedom lies in the use of our limbs, and in being exempt from the controul of others. This in particular is what Dr. PRIESTLEY teaches,* after HOBBES, LEIBNITZ, BAYLE, and others: And surely to such a kind of action, the term *necessary* is rightly applied. For it bears an exact resemblance to that of common mechanism; as, in given circumstances, the agency of a *particular* motive is supposed infallibly to take place, without the Will having it *any way* in its power to

* See *Treat. on Necess.* p. 21, 105, 111, 115, 117, 118, 123. *Corresp. with Dr.* PRICE, p. 145, 147, 161, 177, 300, 315 *note*. I. *Let. to Mr.* PALMER, 79, 86. II. *Do*, 6, 10, 14.

form a volition in behalf of *another* motive. But,

The *Freedom* described in this tract, we see, consists of an *Active Inherent power of the Will*, to form, in a given case of option, a volition in favour, or exclusion, of *any* of the motives, that may solicit attention, and thence, at pleasure, connect the resulting action with any of the trains of secondary causes, to which the motives were appended. It therefore differs essentially in idea from that of common mechanism,* and leaves to man a privilege so singular in the appearance of things, and so efficacious in his little sphere of action, that he may be truly said to be the *real author*, and not the *necessary instrument* of his own fate.

Now, on a comparison of these three accounts of Human Agency, we see that Predestination, on the face of it, excludes all regard to *moral* conduct; as the greatest iniquity does not in the least exclude the hope of securing a timely super-

* Collins makes the only difference between a *man* and a *clock* to consist in *sensation* and *intelligence*.

natural conversion of the heart. According to it, if we *do nothing*, and sit with folded arms, time works equally in our favour; and, if we are *industrious* to gratify unlawful appetites, our final account stands the same in the pages of heaven. This, then, is a doctrine of which it may be said, in the words of a writer who knows its tenets well, that, " If any system of speculative principles can operate as an axe to the root of all virtue and goodness, it is this."* We may observe, however, that though the doctrine of Predestination may be false, there is no innate consciousness that thwarts its admittance into the mind. Its persuasiveness rests upon the fancied evidence of Scripture, or, at least, on the adventitious influence of enthusiasm.

On comparing Philosophical Necessity with this doctrine, we find, that though there is a considerable difference in the *means*, they lead both to the same *end*. The *decreed exit* of a man, according to Predestination, is brought about by a superna-

* Dr. PRIESTLEY, *vide Sect.* XII. *of his Treat. on Necess.* where he tells us he was originally educated in the principles of Calvinism.

tural interruption of the course of things, in order to fulfil the decree; while in Philosophical Necessity, his *exit*, as well as the *whole* series of events which attend his earthly pilgrimage are equally predetermined, or shaped out, on his entrance into life, by the *then* attendant circumstances of his *make* and *situation*, and the *subsequent* necessary influence of motives.*

On this account it is difficult to see (as has ever been powerfully remarked on the occasion) how

* Hear Dr. PRIESTLEY at large on the subject.—"Every man is born with a certain constitution of body and mind, independent of his own choice. The circumstances in which he is born, with respect to country, parents, education, and advantages or disadvantages of all kinds, are likewise altogether independent of himself. It is no matter when you say, that *his first proper volition takes place*, for you must admit it is in *certain definite circumstances*, independent of himself. His determinations, therefore, being by the hypothesis, *certain*, or *definite*, in these circumstances, whatever it be it brings him into other, but definite circumstances; whether foreseen or unforeseen by himself, depends upon his judgment or sagacity. In these new circumstances he makes another *definite choice*, or determination, concerning the *new objects* that are now before him; and this new determi-

the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity is connected with morals. Were we fully persuaded that a Necessity of this kind takes place, it surely would be impossible for us to think it in our power, either to pursue the dictates of a good conscience, or to encounter the frailties of our nature. If we are only the passive instruments of *fate*, (by what rule soever it proceed) how can we be justly accountable for our actions? That there should be *merit* in a man doing an act *freely* from a *good* motive, and *demerit* in doing it *freely* from a *bad* one, is so easy to conceive, that no rational mind was ever without the notion. But, that we should apply these terms to a *necessary* agent, seems as palpably absurd, as if we should attribute *moral praise* to the food that nourishes us, and *moral blame* to the poison that destroys us. *Disposition* of mind, or an aptitude to be

nation brings him into other new circumstances: and thus his whole life passes in a constant succession of *circumstances* and *determinations*, all inseparably connected, till you come to the last determination of all, immediately preceding the extinction of all his powers by death."

II. *Let. to Mr.* PALMER, *p.* 12.

wrought upon by such and such motives, surely can have no meaning, as to *morals*, if that disposition be *necessary*, or derived from a process of intellection, and a series of actions, in which nothing is *free*, but the mere *use* of the bodily and mental qualities concerned in them.

Dr. PRIESTLEY, however, sees this matter in a different light, and asserts, that Philosophical Necessity is favourable to virtue; that, in the most proper sense of the word, every man is the maker of his own fortune,* and that it depends entirely upon himself whether he is virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable.†

This language, the reader will observe, is exactly that of the tenet we espouse; and certainly carries a very paradoxical aspect with it where it stands. They who attribute *Freedom* to the Will, may talk thus consistently; but they who deny it,

* See *Sect.* VIII. *Treat. on Necess.* Also more to the same purpose, *Let.* I. *to Mr.* PALMER, *p.* 69, 71, 72. II. *Let. to Ditto, p.* 30. *Introd. to Corresp. with Dr.* PRICE, *p.* 148, 309, 390.

† *Sect.* XII. *Treat. on Necess. p.* 153. (Also *Corresp. p.* 153, 300, 301, 307.)

I presume, deny the *sole* grounds on which such assertions can be built.* But how the appearance of conclusions which look so contradictory to the premises from which they are drawn, is to be accounted for, we shall not stop to inquire, as we fancy the fact has little to do with our reasoning, and as it is not the intent of this essay to endeavour to refute all principles thought to be er-

* The reason given by the Doctor (*Treat. on Necess. Sect.* VIII. *p.* 97.) why, on his principles, our *good* or *bad* success, &c. *depends upon ourselves*, is, because "our own actions and determinations are necessary links in the chain of causes and events."—Does not this argument create as much surprise in the reader, as if he had said, that *Freedom* was included in his theory of *Necessity?* However, as an *experimental* proof that this doctrine is true, he frequently gives us to understand, that both himself, and other Necessitarians of his acquaintance, find it peculiarly *animating* as to action. The *contrary* indeed might have been expected. But, instead of the fact adding any confirmation to the point in question, I rather imagine it will be thought by many only to shew, that it is *the principles of their opponents* that unconsciously incite them to their active endeavours, though they attempt to persuade themselves the while, that they are the *firm, undeviating* votaries of Necessity.

roneous in the doctrine it opposes, otherwise than by attempting to establish those that are true. I shall therefore only observe further on this part of the subject, that the theory of Philosophical Necessity violates our conscious feelings in two respects; first, in supposing Human Agency *necessary*, and then, in making such necessary actions the ground of *praise* and *blame*, *punishment* and *reward*.*

* In the Publication of Letters, mentioned above, called the *Necessitarian*, the author, as *another* of his main designs, attempts to explain the foundation of *merit* and *demerit* in our actions, on the principles of *Necessity*; but he does not seem to be more successful than his predecessor Dr. PRIESTLEY. The scheme certainly is, and ever will be, liable to many objections. However, as the idea of Liberty, contended for in this tract, supposes motives to be followed *freely*, (and hence applies to, and adopts the common notions of moral conduct) I decline entering at present into what appears an unnecessary part of the controversy, and shall only observe, as to what our author has advanced in behalf of his theory, that it gains its chief plausibility from a *comparison* made of it with one built on the *false* representation of Free Will, mentioned in a former note.

On this topic, and the other noticed above, page 106, (i. e. on the reconciliation of *morals* with *necessary* acts, and the dis-

And here it may be asked, by the bye, if the philosopher be not a greater admirer of *singularity* than *simplicity*, who, amid the strongest appearances of Freedom of Will, teaches its Necessity, and afterwards has the hardiness to attempt to draw from the tenet he adopts, what, most palpably, can only be derived from that which he rejects?

On the whole, then, it appears, that these two doctrines, *Philosophical Necessity* and *Predestination*, have, as to *event*, too much of a family likeness;* and that, if the former of them do not

proving of our *common feeling* of Liberty) the author forms his proof of Human Necessity. But I apprehend, the subject, if not handled *regularly* and at *large*, is so capable of being made to appear in favour of either of the contending opinions, by abilities much inferior to those of our author, that no arguments drawn from so *imperfect* a view of it, can yield due satisfaction to a cautious reader, and free the mind from a suspicion that it *may* be imposed on, as well from what may be *omitted* belonging to the inquiry, as from what may be brought forward under *deceitful appearances*.

* It is not of much consequence in this tract to enter minutely into these *comparisons*. But while we are rather *giving opinions*, than *strictly reasoning*, it may be candid to

in its deducible consequences rise so high in *rigidity* and *constraint*, as the *Destiny* of LEUCIPPUS, (which was supposed to govern both gods and men) it evidently stands far above any ideas of *Fate* that were ever generally entertained by the ancient Jewish and Heathen philosophers. But how much do they differ from the doctrine of Free Will! Here all is in unison with our feelings, and in harmony with what we have hitherto conceived the wisest conclusions of philosophy, and the soundest expositions of Scripture. It is the soul of *action*; the great *practical principle* of life, and the basis of *conscience*. It creates no perplexities concerning morals, but removes many, and seems to be a tenet which gives a rational coherence to all we conceive of the nature and end of man.—But of this more in the next chapter.

inform the reader (in case he has not perused his writings on the subject) that Dr. PRIESTLEY considers the tenet of Philosophical Necessity as more allied to *Armenianism* than *Calvinism*. [Vide *Pref. to Examin. of the* Drs. REID, BEATTIE, *and* OSWALD.]

CHAPTER 19.

CONCLUSION.

THUS, the author has attempted to prove, in the plainest manner he could, that, agreeably to the general sense of mankind, the *Will* is FREE, and wherein that FREEDOM consists. In chapters *fifth* and *eighth* [*Prop.* I. IV.] it is shewn, on the one hand, that the circumstance of *following motives* in our volitions, and the *certainty* of particular motives ultimately prevailing, prove nothing whether the Will be free or not free; though, on these principles is founded the whole of what is plausible in the doctrine of Necessity. On the other hand, it is shewn, chapters *sixth* and *seventh*, [*Prop.* II. III.] that the Will is possessed of a peculiar active property, which enables it to determine its volitions in such a manner as to entitle them to be deemed strictly free. In chapter *tenth*, it is farther mani-

fested, that the notion of *Freedom* given in these pages, does not differ from what we should conceive of it in the abstract, and that we are probably free if the Deity be free. Chapters *tenth*, *eleventh*, *twelfth*, and *thirteenth*, contain several supplemental arguments and considerations in behalf of our theory, which manifest how excessively, in some points, we must strain both *ideas* and *words*, to give plausibility to that which it opposes. The suffrages of Common Sense and Scripture are next (chapters *fourteenth* and *fifteenth*) produced in favour of our doctrine. All which, with the several collateral arguments of chapters *sixteenth* and *seventeenth*, and the evident bad effects the controverted tenet would have on morality, &c. glanced at chapter *eighteenth*, and other places, the author flatters himself constitute a mass of evidence in its favour, which, if not truly demonstrative, is, at least, sufficient to procure an assent as hearty as right reason would wish, or can be expected to be derived from any deductions of so metaphysical a kind.

Indeed the opposite doctrine of Philosophical Necessity is so repugnant to our feelings, and has

such little support from even those subtleties of philosophy which may be enlisted on the side of *any* opinion, that to find it openly espoused by men of sober thought and enlightened minds would create our astonishment, but that we every day see what wonders of delusion may be wrought by the single charm of prejudice.

Is it not strange, that a doctrine should be propagated, which can scarce boast the aid of *one* plausible collateral argument;* that is neither clear in itself, nor helps to make any thing else clear, but becomes the parent of numberless doubts and difficulties? A doctrine from which the heart mostly revolts in theory, and which is constantly denied in practice; which staggers the honest instincts of the vulgar, and even appals the intrepidity of the philosopher? But so it has happened. No absurdity in the opinion, no untowardness in its proofs, nor perplexity in its conclusion, have been able to prevent its meeting with advocates.

* *That* concerning the medium which Philosophical Necessity possesses for the Divine Prescience, (the only one alledged) is shewn above not to be *appropriate*; but to belong equally to Philosophical Liberty.

I know it would not be called lawful by some adversaries to use declamation on the subject, as they are aware, that its *tones* might easily bring down the walls of a greater *Jericho*. But, why wish its assistance? Against the Necessity in question all that is *moral* cries aloud; and, saving the trump of *Horeb*, its voice *ought* to be, and *will* be the most powerful of any in nature. To the dictates of this teacher (as no doubt was intended) the simple and unperverted will always conform. And though some may be puzzled with the opposing sound, or be mistaken in its source and import, yet to mankind in general, the *name* of *Necessity* must still appear *unpleasing*, and its doctrine *pernicious*.

How contrary is this to the cheering suggestions of *Free Will!* It at once conciliates the affections, finds favour in the understanding, and has the testimony of its own principles confirmed by a number of auxiliary proofs. As the Sun illumines the *natural world*, *it* enlightens the *moral*, and from it, the *actions* of men, the *duties* of the present life, and *hopes* of a better, receive a warmth of colouring, a distinctness of place, and truth of re-

presentation, as we may say, which will ever and equally charm the feelings of the untaught beholder, and the eye of more penetrating wisdom. Like the luminary to which it is compared, the *intent*, *fitness*, and *dignity* of Free Will are apparent to every one; and, though, had neither of these great enlighteners of the world existed, we might and ought to have piously submitted to our condition, and reasonably concluded *all was for the best*, yet, now that we enjoy these glorious gifts, we should accept them, if possible, with still higher gratitude and complacency, and never injure our honest exultation, with sceptical distrust, and by pursuing the theories of that *vain* philosophy, which can refine any thing away.

Having now said all intended on the nature of Human Liberty, it may be proper to give a short account of what it is, in the form of a definition. LIBERTY OF HUMAN ACTION, THEN, APPEARS TO LIE IN THAT ACTIVE PROPERTY OF THE WILL, FROM WHICH IT IS ENABLED (BY THE ASSISTANCE OF SOME MOTIVE OR OTHER) IN ANY INSTANCE TO FORM A VOLITION EITHER IN FAVOUR OF, OR AGAINST THE INFLUENCE

OF ANY GIVEN MOTIVE. Its *characteristic* quality therefore is not the power of forming determinations without any motive, as some erroneously represent it, but in *not being obliged* to do it in concurrence with any that can be assigned; which, according to the genuine conception of Necessity, must be the case to make the Will necessary.

Though truths expressed in a few words may often require a multitude to investigate them, yet when they relate to human conduct, we should never grudge the labour. It however is something unpleasing to be busied in only *recovering* those that have been rejected by the vanity of man; but this must still be the task of some, while others feel an inclination to unsettle our minds in any thing, provided they can be accounted adepts in philosophy, or patch up some flaw in a favourite system. As it is the practice of true sportsmen to let loose an animal of chace, which they have in possession, merely for the pleasure of retaking, or attempting to retake it; so, some authors are delighted in delivering up salutary truth to the wilds of sophistry and scepticism, to amuse themselves and others in the chace that

may produce its recovery. But such philosophical Nimrods should consider, the chance of their object finally escaping, and the great injury it might in that case do, by its increase and depredations in the peaceful villages.

Since the period at which Christian philosophers first ventured to *start* objections to the free-agency of man on the *inherent* principles of the Will, and propagate the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, —and which is about one hundred and thirty years ago,* that tenet (to *run* the figure quite down) has been the object of many a metaphysical pursuit: but not with the desired success of its enemies. The monster (may we not here so call it?) and its progeny are still abroad; and if the author cannot flatter himself that his essay is likely to bring the chace to a speedy termination, every lover of truth and tranquillity will join him in saying, that the event, by one means or other, is devoutly to be wished.

* *Hobbes's Treatise on Liberty and Necessity*, published 1654, seems to be the first English work expressly teaching this doctrine; and I do not know that his notions were anticipated by any *foreign* writer.

To be positive in some subjects of speculation must be wrong, on account of their intricacy. But to deliver ourselves with proper confidence of their truth, may convey a favourable idea of our honesty, whatever it may do of our modesty. The great Necessitarian, whose writings gave rise to this tract, tells us, he has long considered the subject; that he thinks it demonstrable; the clearest of all questions, and that he has "no feeling of either *fear* or *arrogance* in challenging the whole world in its defence." He compares it to such ground, as one man may defend against an army, and adds, that "it is therefore absolutely indifferent to him, by *whom*, or by *how many*, he is assailed."*

A recollection of language so bold and decisive, at the close of our inquiry, may well repress some self-satisfaction of its truth. Retreating friends, and the shouts of a potent adversary, might intimidate the heart of the stoutest. Yet I would gladly persuade myself, that what has been laid down in these pages, will have force

* I. Let. to Mr. PALMER, p. 92.

sufficient to call the Sons of *Liberty* once more to the field, and *yet* give them hopes of a favourable issue to their cause. As new minds will suggest new matter, and rectify preceding oversights, I would hope, on the one hand, that the direct proof given, in the *four Propositions*, of Human Liberty, (or that the process of the mind contains a species of cause which has a *free effect*) may be clearly made out several ways; and, on the other, that the *first* and *fourth* of them will completely overthrow the chief principles, on which the opposite theory is built; and, hence, shew, that the Freedom of men's Actions is not only the opinion of Common Sense, and the doctrine of Scripture, but also the conclusion of Philosophy.

There is no difficult position of a moral nature, however true, to which something plausible cannot be objected; because, if men were qualified to see it with due comprehension and clearness, language, perhaps, is not able, in an ordinary compass, to introduce and express all the ideas that belong to it. Nor is there, likewise, any hypothesis, however false, in the establishment of which there is not to be found an admixture of

truth; just, as in a populous country, there will be an occasional coincidence of roads, which terminate in districts very remote.

Though the author, therefore, has little doubt of the outlines of his theory being laid down in conformity to truth and nature, he, nevertheless, does not expect they will be free from incidental inaccuracies. In behalf, also, of the scheme it opposes, philosophy may probably find many things to urge; while the harshnesses of its features will always admit of being softened by the breathings of piety. Still, however, the doctrine of Necessity seems utterly untenable; and he would fancy, it can now hope for no other support, than what originates in some vague ideas *of God being all in all*, or in evasive distinctions respecting what *is*, or what *is not* Freedom and Necessity.

With regard to the merits of learned and scientific theories of truth, the chief part of mankind must ground their opinions on *authority*, if they form any opinions at all. And should certain late publications have had such a sway with some well-meaning persons, not versed in philosophy, as to make them entertain doubts of the Freedom

of the Will, and think that, probably, every act or event of their lives, is in conformity to the direct *appointment* of God, or *Necessary*; I hope others of name and consequence in the world of letters will soon appear, and give such a sanction and evidence to *this* first of all moral truths, for which we are contending, as to reinstate it firmly and finally in their minds. As there is always a disposition in the earth to send forth verdure, however trod upon; so *Common Sense* has ever a propensity to believe its own suggestions, however slighted. And, although it cannot comprehend a mental process so *well*, nor in the same *manner* as a philosopher, yet it is one gracious and wise dispensation of our Maker, that, like the great truths concerning *the nature of his Being*, *the grounds of Virtue*, and *the efficacy of Faith*, this in question may be so clearly *seen* or *felt* by ordinary understandings, as to become with them a *practical principle* equally vital and saving as with the most enlightened abilities.

FINIS.